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# The Food Stamp Program's Elderly Nutrition Pilot Demonstration

## Final Evaluation Design

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## Abstract

Low participation rates in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) by poor elderly individuals have been a persistent problem. Historically, no more than one-third of eligible elderly have participated in the FSP—a participation rate far lower than that of any other major demographic group. To address the low participation rates among the elderly, USDA is funding the Elderly Nutrition Demonstrations—six separate pilot programs that are testing three alternative ways to increase elderly participation in the FSP. This report discusses the logistical considerations for evaluating the impacts of the six demonstrations. It presents an overview of the evaluation design, discusses alternative approaches for data collection, presents a schedule for the evaluation, and presents the expected costs of the evaluation.

Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program

**This report was prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., under a cooperative research agreement with the Economic Research Service. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of ERS or USDA.**

## CONTENTS

**CONTENTS** (*continued*)

**CONTENTS** (*continued*)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Low participation rates in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) by poor elderly individuals have been a persistent problem. Historically, no more than one-third of eligible elderly individuals have participated in the FSP—a participation rate that is far lower than that of any other major demographic group. To address the low participation rates among the elderly, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is funding the Elderly Nutrition Demonstrations—six separate pilot programs that are testing three alternative ways to increase elderly participation in the FSP and improve the satisfaction of elderly persons who participate. Insights and information obtained from the evaluation of these demonstrations should help federal policymakers formulate effective strategies for increasing FSP participation among the elderly.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) was selected through a competitive bidding process to design the evaluation of the Elderly Nutrition Demonstration pilots, prepare a schedule for the evaluation, and estimate the cost of conducting the evaluation. The evaluation design is presented in Sing et al. (2002). This final report presents evaluation design options, schedules, and cost estimates for the evaluation.

### THREE DEMONSTRATION MODELS TO INCREASE THE ELDERLY'S FSP PARTICIPATION RATES

During the summer of 2001, the USDA entered into two-year cooperative agreements with six states to implement three demonstration models. Florida is implementing the simplified eligibility model, which is designed to reduce the burden associated with applying for food stamps by simplifying the process of determining eligibility. Arizona, Maine, and Michigan are implementing the application assistance model, which is intended to increase eligible elderly individuals' understanding of the program and assist elderly individuals with the application process. Connecticut and North Carolina are implementing the alternative food stamp commodities model which provides food stamp benefits as commodities rather than either coupons or as payments on an EBT card.[1]

Florida and Maine began serving clients under the demonstration in February 2002. If the demonstrations end in September 2003, Florida and Maine will have served clients for 20 months. North Carolina anticipates that it will start to serve clients sometime during the spring of 2002. Arizona hopes to start in June 2002, but acknowledges that this is an optimistic estimate. Michigan anticipates starting in June 2002, and Connecticut anticipates starting in October 2002.

[1]The pilot in Arizona is replacing a pilot in Oregon which asked to withdraw from the demonstration.

## OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION DESIGN

There are six research objectives for the evaluation:

1. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on elderly FSP participation
2. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on the average value of the FSP benefit that elderly households receive
3. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on client satisfaction with various aspects of the FSP
4. Quantify the federal, state, and local costs of the demonstrations
5. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on state and local FSP agencies, nonprofit organizations participating in the demonstrations, alternative food assistance providers, and other stakeholders
6. Describe the implementation of the demonstrations, problems encountered, solutions to these problems, and lessons learned.

The evaluation design includes both an impact analysis and a process analysis of each site's demonstration. The impact analysis will evaluate the effects of the demonstrations on FSP participation, average benefit levels, client satisfaction, and ongoing administrative costs of the demonstrations. The impact analysis will use a pre-post comparison group design. Administrative data and a survey or focus groups with demonstration participants will provide key information to support the analyses. The process analysis will quantify the costs of the demonstration, identify the effects of the demonstrations on stakeholders, and describe the implementation process. Data for the process analysis will be from discussions with demonstration staff and stakeholders, cost worksheets completed by demonstration staff, and the Quarterly Reports submitted by the demonstrations. The evaluation objectives, data sources, methodologies and evaluation design issues are summarized in Table 1.

## EVALUATION DESIGN OPTIONS AND ESTIMATED COSTS

There are two key design options that have a major bearing on the costs of the evaluation. They are:

- Whether the demonstration grant period is two years (ending in September 2003) or is extended for all or part of a third, option year (ending in September 2004)
- Whether client satisfaction will be assessed with a survey at the commodity alternative sites or with focus group discussions at all sites

Currently, the two-year demonstration grant period ends in September 2003. However, it is very likely that the USDA will seek to negotiate an extension with each of the demonstrations to provide more time for the demonstrations to operate. If a third year is added, the demonstrations could operate until September 2004.

TABLE 1

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, DATA SOURCES, AND EVALUATION DESIGN ISSUES

| Evaluation Objective | Data Sources | Methodology | Evaluation Design Issues |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Assess effects on FSP participation | Quarterly FSP participation data obtained for sites from states, beginning 7 months before start of demonstration | Descriptive analysis of data from pre/post comparison group analysis<br><br>Conduct sensitivity analysis<br><br>Use findings from process analysis | Identifying appropriate comparison sites<br><br>Acquiring data<br><br>Determining whether change in participation occurred at demonstration site<br><br>Determining extent to which change in participation (if any) was due to demonstration or other factors |
| (2) Assess effects on level of food stamp benefits | Quarterly participation data obtained for sites from states, beginning 7 months before the start of the demonstration<br><br>Grocery store price scan data | Descriptive analysis of data on benefit value and federal costs from pre/post comparison group analysis | Determining whether change in average benefits occurred at demonstration site<br><br>Measuring value of commodities |
| (3) Assess effects on client satisfaction | Survey of elderly clients in commodity alternative sites who apply/recertify for food stamps<br>or<br>Focus groups with clients at each site | Univariate and multivariate regression analysis of survey data<br><br>Qualitative analysis of focus group data | Assessing the reliability and validity of satisfaction measures |
| (4) Quantify costs of the demonstrations | Quarterly reports<br><br>Discussions with stakeholders<br><br>Participation data | Descriptive comparisons<br><br>Process analysis<br><br>“Building-up” cost estimates | Compiling uniform and accurate cost measures across sites<br><br>Measuring cost of volunteers |

TABLE 1 (*continued*)

| Evaluation Objective | Data Sources | Methodology | Evaluation Design Issues |
|---|---|---|---|
| (5) Assess effects on stakeholders | Quarterly telephone discussions with key demonstration staff<br><br>Annual site visits<br><br>Quarterly reports | Process analysis | Triangulating the findings by speaking with all relevant stakeholders<br><br>Developing ways to encourage and secure participation of key informants<br><br>Identifying the correct people to speak with in each organization |
| (6) Describe implementation process | Discussions with stakeholders<br><br>Site visit<br><br>Quarterly reports | Process analysis | Identifying the correct people to speak with in each organization |

USDA may extend the two-year demonstration grant period by awarding additional funds to each site, or by negotiating a no-cost extension to the current two-year grant period (for sites that have not spent all of their grant funds). The latter should be sufficient to allow the demonstrations to serve clients for two years.

Due to evaluation resource constraints, the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will decide whether to assess client satisfaction with a client satisfaction survey at the commodity alternative sites or with focus groups conducted at all sites. If a client satisfaction survey is conducted, we recommend that the evaluators attempt to interview all households in the target population in North Carolina, and a sample of the target population in Connecticut.

We estimate that the evaluation will cost approximately $1,200,000 to $1,300,000 if the demonstrations end in September 2003 and a survey is conducted in the commodity alternative sites to assess client satisfaction. If focus groups are conducted at all sites to assess client satisfaction, we estimate that the evaluation will cost approximately $1,000,000 to $1,100,000. If the demonstrations end on September 2004, we estimate that the evaluation will cost an additional $550,000 to $620,000 if a survey is conducted and $330,000 to $360,000 if focus groups are conducted to assess client satisfaction. These cost estimates were developed for 13 separate evaluation activities by estimating the costs during the baseline period (during which the demonstrations operate through September 2003), Option A (during which each demonstration serves clients for two years), and Option B (during which the demonstrations operate through September 2004) (Tables 2 and 3).

It is important to keep in mind that our cost estimates rely on a number of assumptions that are described in this report and that draw from MPR's experience conducting similar evaluations. During the evaluation, unanticipated circumstances or additional information about the demonstrations (such as the actual size of their survey target populations) will likely require revising the cost estimates presented here.

## RECOMMENDATION

We have one primary recommendation pertaining to the evaluation. We recommend that the USDA provide funding for the demonstrations to operate until September 2004 or beyond. It often takes interventions such as demonstrations several years to yield any detectable impacts. Consequently, the demonstrations are more likely to yield measurable impacts on FSP participation and client satisfaction if they operate for an additional year. Another year of operation will also provide the evaluators with more data to evaluate. This is particularly important for the evaluation of client satisfaction. Because Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval is required for the client satisfaction survey, the survey data collection will not begin until June 2003 or later—depending on when OMB approval is obtained. If survey data collection begins in June 2003 and the demonstrations end in September 2003, the evaluators will be able to collect data on client satisfaction for only three quarters. If OMB approval takes more than three months, the evaluators will be able to collect data on client satisfaction for only two quarters.

TABLE 2

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF EVALUATING THE ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATIONS:
OPTION WITH CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY AT COMMODITY SITES—NO FOCUS GROUPS
(In Dollars)

| Study Task | Baseline Budget[a] | Additional Costs Option A[b] | Additional Costs Option B[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Analysis of participation and benefits | $140,000 - $160,000 | $40,000 - $50,00 | $45,000 - $55,000 |
| Two interim memoranda—analysis of FSP participation and benefits | $25,000 - $30,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey Design (instrumentation, programming, sample design, and sample frame) | 110,000 - 130,000 | 6,000 – 8,000 | 6,000 – 8,000 |
| OMB submission | 40,000 – 60,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey data collection | 150,000 - 160,000 | 185,000 – 205,000 | 190,000 – 210,000 |
| Survey data processing, weighting, and analysis | 90,000 - 100,000 | 30,000 – 40,000 | 30,000 – 40,000 |
| Conduct and analyze focus groups | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Quantify costs | 120,000 - 140,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 |
| Process analysis | 310,000 - 340,000 | 130,000 - 140,000 | 180,000 - 200,000 |
| Interim Report | N/A | 75,000 - 85,000 | 75,000 - 85,000 |
| Final Report | 100,000 - 110,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Orientation meeting, design memorandum, and final briefing | 45,000 - 55,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Project management | 25,000 - 35,000 | 15,000 – 25,000 | 15,000 - 25,000 |
| **TOTAL** | $1,200,000 - $1,300,000 | $500,000 - $550,000 | $550,000 - $620,000 |

NOTE: The assumptions used to compute these cost estimates, such as survey sample sizes, are described in this report.

[a]Demonstrations end in September 2003
[b]Demonstrations end after serving clients for two years (February 2004 through September 2004, depending upon the site).
[c]Demonstrations end in September 2004

TABLE 3

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF EVALUATING THE ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATIONS:
OPTION WITH CLIENT SATISFACTION FOCUS GROUPS—NO SURVEY
(In Dollars)

| Study Task | Baseline Budget[a] | Additional Costs Option A[b] | Additional Costs Option B[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Analysis of participation and benefits | $140,000 - $160,000 | $40,00 - $50,00 | $45,000 - $55,000 |
| Two interim memoranda—analysis of FSP participation and benefits | 25,000 - 30,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey Design (instrumentation, programming, sample design, and sample frame) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OMB submission | 40,000 – 60,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey data collection | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey data processing, weighting, and analysis | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Conduct and analyze focus groups | 190,000 – 210,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Quantify costs | 120,000 - 140,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 |
| Process analysis | 310,000 - 340,000 | 130,000 - 140,000 | 180,000 - 200,000 |
| Interim Report | N/A | 75,000 - 85,000 | 75,000 - 85,000 |
| Final Report | 100,000 - 110,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Orientation meeting, design memorandum, and final briefing | 45,000 - 55,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Project management | 25,000 - 35,000 | 15,000 – 25,000 | 15,000 - 25,000 |
| **TOTAL** | $1,000,000 - $1,100,000 | $270,000 - $300,000 | $330,000 - $360,000 |

NOTE: The assumptions used to compute these cost estimates are described in this report.

[a]Demonstrations end in September 2003.
[b]Demonstrations end after serving clients for two years (February 2004 through September 2004, depending upon the site).
[c]Demonstrations end in September 2004.

# I. INTRODUCTION

Low participation rates in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) by poor elderly individuals have been a persistent problem. Historically, no more than one-third of eligible elderly individuals have participated in the FSP—a participation rate that is far lower than that of any other major demographic group. For example, in 1999, the participation rate of all nonelderly FSP-eligible individuals was almost twice that of the elderly. Five years earlier, when economic conditions were not as strong, the participation rate for the nonelderly was much higher, at 78 percent, yet the participation rate for the elderly was still just 32 percent.

To address the low participation rates among the elderly, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is funding the Elderly Nutrition Demonstrations—six separate pilot programs that are testing three alternative ways to increase elderly participation in the FSP and improve the satisfaction of elderly persons who participate. Insights and information obtained from the evaluation of these demonstrations should help federal policymakers formulate effective strategies for increasing FSP participation among the elderly.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) was selected through a competitive bidding process to design the evaluation of the Elderly Nutrition Demonstration pilots, prepare a schedule for the evaluation, and estimate the cost of conducting the evaluation. The evaluation design is presented in Sing et al. (2002). This report presents evaluation design options, schedules, and cost estimates for the evaluation. We assume that readers of this report have read or have access to the evaluation design report, so much of the information presented in the design report is not repeated in this report.

This chapter briefly presents the policy context for the evaluation, describes the six pilots, presents an overview of the design, and concludes with a recommendation.

## A. THREE DEMONSTRATION MODELS TO INCREASE THE ELDERLY'S FSP PARTICIPATION RATES

USDA developed three demonstration models that are intended to increase elderly participation in the FSP: (1) the Simplified Eligibility and Benefit Determination model, (2) the Application Assistance for Eligible Elderly model, and (3) the Alternative Food Stamp Commodity Benefit model. These models seek to reduce the barriers to FSP participation that elderly persons face. Strategies include simplifying the application process, increasing eligible elderly individuals' understanding of the program, assisting elderly individuals with the application process, or providing food stamp benefits as commodities rather than either coupons or as payments on an EBT card. All three models rely heavily on publicity campaigns to expand outreach efforts to eligible elderly. These campaigns will increase awareness of FSP eligibility, nutritional issues, and demonstration benefits.

USDA has entered into cooperative agreements with six states to implement these demonstration models. Florida is implementing the simplified eligibility and benefit determination model; Arizona, Maine and Michigan are implementing the application assistance model; and Connecticut and North Carolina are implementing the alternative food stamp commodities model.[2]

### 1. Simplified Eligibility Model (Florida)

The simplified eligibility model is designed to reduce the burden associated with applying for food stamps by simplifying the process of determining eligibility. Florida's simplified eligibility demonstration is available to households consisting of elderly individuals only and will be implemented in two pilot counties, Gadsden and Leon. The demonstration will take

[2] The pilot in Arizona is replacing a pilot in Oregon which asked to withdraw from the demonstration.

several steps to reduce the burden of applying for food stamps. Elderly individuals applying for food stamps will be given a short, one-page application that asks only relevant information (the longer, universal form requests information about the age of children and other characteristics not relevant to this population). Elderly individuals will not have to provide documentation verifying their income and deduction amounts. Completed applications can be mailed or faxed to the local office, or the individual, a friend, or an advocate can drop them off. The face-to-face application and recertification interviews will be waived.

The Florida demonstration will require applicants to verify citizenship status. Additionally, the state will verify Social Security numbers, Social Security income and SSI income using existing databases. Because the shorter application form is part of the application assistance model and not the simplified eligibility model, the state will also use the shorter form in two comparison counties (Alachua and Jackson counties) but will not change the rules.

### 2. Application Assistance Model (Arizona, Maine, and Michigan)

The application assistance model uses strategies designed to improve outreach to eligible nonparticipants and to reduce the burden of applying for food stamps by providing assistance with the application process. Under this demonstration, eligibility rules will remain unchanged, but elderly people will be provided with help in understanding program requirements and in completing their applications. Sites implementing application assistance models will link elderly applicants with application assistance workers from nonprofit community service organizations. Assistance workers will provide one-on-one application assistance, helping elderly applicants assemble documents needed to apply for food stamps, understand the application, and complete forms. Application assistance workers may also participate in the applicant's caseworker interviews to interpret difficult questions and prevent errors. This assistance is intended not only to help the elderly meet program requirements but also to provide emotional support. Arizona

(Yavapai and Pinal counties), Maine (Waldo County) and Michigan (Genesee County) have developed variations of the application assistance model.

### 3. Commodity Alternative Model (Connecticut and North Carolina)

Under the commodity alternative model, elderly FSP households will have the option of receiving one or two packages of commodities each month instead of food stamp coupons or an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. Food packages will be designed to meet the unique nutritional needs of the elderly. In areas with large multicultural populations, packages might include ethnic or traditional foods in an attempt to attract new elderly participants from these groups. This model will be implemented in Connecticut (10 towns in the Hartford area) and North Carolina (Alamance County).

Households participating in this model will be limited to those in which all members are elderly, and households can receive one package for every eligible elderly member. Households applying for food stamps can choose between the food packages and traditional food stamp benefits. With some restrictions, households that select commodities can switch to food stamps, and vice versa.

Nonprofit food distribution programs that partner with the state FSP office will distribute commodities packages. These organizations will take primary responsibility for ordering, storing and distributing the commodities packages. Other organizations, such as health service organizations, churches, and Meals on Wheels, will assist with publicity, nutrition education, and home deliveries. Commodities will be delivered to certain participants' homes. Most participants (or their authorized representatives) will pick up packages at local distribution centers.

Each commodity package will cost the same as the average benefit that elderly FSP recipients receive in the commodity alternative pilot sites. This cost includes the cost of the commodities and the cost to the federal government of shipping the commodities to the commodity sites. Thus, if elderly households in a pilot site receive an average FSP benefit of $40, then the demonstration can distribute packages whose contents cost $40 to procure and ship. The cost of the packages will be the same for all participants, regardless of the benefit amount for which they are eligible.

### 4. Demonstration and Evaluation Schedules

During the summer of 2002, the USDA awarded two-year grants to the demonstration sites.[3] The two-year grant period ends in September 2003. If extensions are approved, the demonstrations could operate until September 2004. The USDA may extend the two-year demonstration grant period by awarding additional funds to each site, or by negotiating a no-cost extension to the current two-year grant period (for sites that have not spent all of their grant funds). If the USDA adds additional funds to the demonstrations, it is likely that they will operate until September 2004. If the USDA instead negotiates no-cost extensions with each demonstration, each demonstration will end when its grant funds run out, which will probably be sometime between October 2003 and September 2004.

Two sites—Florida and Maine--began serving clients under the demonstration in February 2002. If the demonstrations end in September 2003, Florida and Maine will have served clients for 20 months. North Carolina anticipates that it will start to serve clients sometime during the spring of 2002. Arizona hopes to start in June 2002, but acknowledges that this is an optimistic estimate. Michigan anticipates starting in June 2002, and Connecticut anticipates starting in October 2002.

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[3] A two-year grant was awarded to Arizona in early February 2002, after Oregon withdrew from the demonstration.

Throughout this report, we assume that the evaluation of these demonstrations will begin in October 2002. At that time, all the demonstrations should be serving clients. Both Florida and Maine will be in their ninth month of serving clients under the demonstration. North Carolina, Michigan, and Arizona, will each have four to seven months of experience serving clients, and Connecticut will probably be in its first month of operation.

## B. OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION DESIGN

There are six research objectives for the evaluation:

1. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on elderly FSP participation
2. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on the average value of the FSP benefit that elderly households receive
3. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on client satisfaction with various aspects of the FSP
4. Quantify the federal, state, and local costs of the demonstrations
5. Assess the effects of the demonstrations on state and local FSP agencies, nonprofit organizations participating in the demonstrations, alternative food assistance providers, and other stakeholders
6. Describe the implementation of the demonstrations, problems encountered, solutions to these problems, and lessons learned.

The evaluation design includes both an impact analysis and a process analysis of each site's demonstration. The impact analysis will evaluate the effects of the demonstrations on FSP participation, average benefit levels, client satisfaction, and ongoing administrative costs of the demonstrations. The impact analysis will use a pre-post comparison group design. Administrative data and a survey of demonstration participants will provide key information to support the analyses. The process analysis will quantify the costs of the demonstration, identify the effects of the demonstrations on stakeholders, and describe the implementation process. The

TABLE I.1

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, DATA SOURCES, AND EVALUATION DESIGN ISSUES

| Evaluation Objective | Data Sources | Methodology | Evaluation Design Issues |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Assess effects on FSP participation | Quarterly FSP participation data obtained for sites from states, beginning 7 months before start of demonstration | Descriptive analysis of data from pre/post comparison group analysis<br><br>Conduct sensitivity analysis<br><br>Use findings from process analysis | Identifying appropriate comparison sites<br><br>Acquiring data<br><br>Determining whether change in participation occurred at demonstration site<br><br>Determining extent to which change in participation (if any) was due to demonstration or other factors |
| (2) Assess effects on level of food stamp benefits | Quarterly participation data obtained for sites from states, beginning 7 months before the start of the demonstration<br><br>Grocery store price scan data | Descriptive analysis of data on benefit value and federal costs from pre/post comparison group analysis | Determining whether change in average benefits occurred at demonstration site<br><br>Measuring value of commodities |
| (3) Assess effects on client satisfaction | Survey of elderly clients in commodity alternative sites who apply/recertify for food stamps<br>or<br>Focus groups with clients at each site | Univariate and multivariate regression analysis of survey data<br><br>Qualitative analysis of focus group data | Assessing the reliability and validity of satisfaction measures |
| (4) Quantify costs of the demonstrations | Quarterly reports<br><br>Discussions with stakeholders<br><br>Participation data | Descriptive comparisons<br><br>Process analysis<br><br>“Building-up” cost estimates | Compiling uniform and accurate cost measures across sites<br><br>Measuring cost of volunteers |

TABLE I.1 (*continued*)

| Evaluation Objective | Data Sources | Methodology | Evaluation Design Issues |
|---|---|---|---|
| (5) Assess effects on stakeholders | Quarterly telephone discussions with key demonstration staff<br><br>Annual site visits<br><br>Quarterly reports | Process analysis | Triangulating the findings by speaking with all relevant stakeholders<br><br>Developing ways to encourage and secure participation of key informants<br><br>Identifying the correct people to speak with in each organization |
| (6) Describe implementation process | Discussions with stakeholders<br><br>Site visit<br><br>Quarterly reports | Process analysis | Identifying the correct people to speak with in each organization |

evaluation objectives, data sources, methods, and evaluation design issues are described below and are summarized in Table I.1.

### 1. Assess the Effects of the Demonstrations on Elderly FSP Participation

Because a primary demonstration goal is to increase elderly FSP participation, a key objective of the evaluation is to measure the impact of each demonstration on the number of elderly households participating in the FSP. By comparing the rate of change in elderly participation in the pilot sites with the corresponding rate of change in elderly participation in similar comparison sites, the evaluation will attempt to identify how much of an observed change in elderly participation at the pilot sites is due to the demonstration versus other factors. The evaluation also will attempt to determine if the effects vary by subgroup (such as racial and ethnic groups, urban and rural residence, etc.). Administrative data will be used to measure the impacts on elderly participation.

### 2. Assess the Effects of the Demonstrations on the Average Value of FSP Benefits that Elderly Households Receive

In affecting participation, the demonstration also might affect the average benefit paid to elderly residents in the pilot sites. All of the models might attract individuals eligible for higher-than-average or lower-than-average benefits. Additionally, the commodities alternative model might provide individuals with a package valued higher or lower than their traditional FSP benefits. Measuring the impact of the demonstrations on the value of FSP benefits will help USDA anticipate the costs associated with replicating the demonstrations on a larger scale. To measure this impact, the evaluation will compare the average benefit received by elderly households in the pilot site with the average benefit received by elderly in other sites (see Sing et al. 2002). Additionally, for the commodity alternative demonstrations, the evaluation will determine how many households choose traditional FSP benefits and how many choose commodity benefits. The evaluation will use administrative data to measure the impact on average benefits.

### 3. Assess the Effects of the Demonstrations on Client Satisfaction

To assess whether the FSP better meets the needs of the low-income elderly population under the demonstrations, the evaluation will assess the level of client satisfaction with the FSP overall and with key components of the program. Due to evaluation resource constraints, the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will decide whether to assess client satisfaction with a client satisfaction survey at the commodity alternative sites or with focus groups conducted at all sites. If a client satisfaction survey is conducted, we recommend that the evaluators attempt to interview all households in the target population in North Carolina, and a sample of the target population in Connecticut. Of particular interest for the commodity alternative model is the clients' satisfaction with receiving benefits in the form of commodities, in terms of the quality, quantity, and types of commodities received, and, also the process for receiving the commodities. The evaluation will measure whether the level of satisfaction is different for those who selected the commodity option compared with those who did not. Findings from the client satisfaction survey can be used to interpret findings from the participation impact analysis.

### 4. Quantify the Federal, State, and Local Costs of the Demonstrations

Understanding the costs of the demonstrations will help USDA anticipate the costs of replicating successful demonstrations on a larger scale. The evaluation will measure the costs associated with the start-up of the demonstration, including the cost of training staff, conducting publicity campaigns, and developing partnerships with outside organizations. It will also measure the cost of ongoing administration of the demonstrations, including not only the costs incurred by the federal FSP, but also the costs incurred by the state and local FSP agencies, as well as by nonprofit organizations. Data to support the analyses will come from administrative reports, as well as discussions with program directors and key demonstration staff.

### 5. Assess the Effects of the Demonstrations on Stakeholders

Although the demonstrations are designed to affect the FSP-eligible elderly population, the demonstrations also will affect other stakeholders, including state and local FSP agencies, any partner organizations that help administer the demonstrations, and alternative food assistance providers in the community. The evaluation will assess the effects on each of these stakeholders. In particular, the evaluation will examine how the operations of the FSP local offices change because of the demonstration, including any changes in the application procedures, the roles of the caseworkers or the caseworker caseloads, concerns about fraud, and the services caseworkers provide. It will address whether services improved for elderly participants at the cost of poorer service to other participants. It also will assess whether the demonstrations had any effect on the demand for food from alternative food assistance providers. Data to support these analyses will come from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholder staff, supplemented with data from the quarterly reports submitted by the sites.

### 6. Describe the Implementation of the Demonstrations

Another important goal of the Elderly Nutrition Demonstrations is to identify how effective strategies can be replicated. To this end, the evaluation will describe in detail how each site implemented its demonstration. This will include a detailed description of the changes each agency—the state (and county, if applicable) FSP agency, local FSP agencies, and nonprofit organizations—made to implement the demonstration. All steps will be described, including the process for identifying and recruiting nonprofit organizations as partners, outreach efforts, changes to application forms, staff training, and any other administrative changes. The evaluation will also ask each stakeholder to describe the problems encountered in implementing the demonstration, how these problems were overcome, and what lessons were learned while implementing the demonstration. Understanding the problems involved in implementing the demonstrations will not only assist future efforts to implement similar programs, but also it will assist the evaluators in interpreting the findings from the evaluation.

## C. RECOMMENDATION

We have one primary recommendation pertaining to the evaluation. We recommend that USDA provide funding for the demonstrations to operate until September 2004 or beyond. It often takes interventions such as demonstrations several years to yield any detectable impacts. Consequently, the demonstrations are more likely to yield measurable impacts on FSP participation and client satisfaction if they operate for an additional year. Another year of operation will also provide the evaluators with more data to evaluate. This is particularly important for the evaluation of client satisfaction. Because Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval is required for the client satisfactions survey (as described in Chapter II), the survey data collection will not begin until June 2003 or later—depending on when OMB approval is obtained. If survey data collection begins in June 2003 and the demonstrations end in September 2003, the evaluators will be able to collect data on client satisfaction for only three quarters. If OMB approval takes more than three months, the evaluators will be able to collect data on client satisfaction for only two quarters.

The rest of our recommendations pertaining to the evaluation are presented in Chapter II of this report.

## D. ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The remainder of this report describes the evaluation options, schedule, and budget options for the evaluation of the Elderly Nutrition demonstrations. Chapter II presents the evaluation options and schedule. Chapter III presents the budget options and assumptions. Appendix A presents minor revisions to the Final Design Report (Sing et al. 2002) due to information we received after writing that report. It contains information about Arizona, which replaced Oregon as the sixth demonstration state, presents the comparison sites selected for Arizona and Michigan, and includes clarifications to the data specifications.

## II. EVALUATION OPTIONS AND SCHEDULE

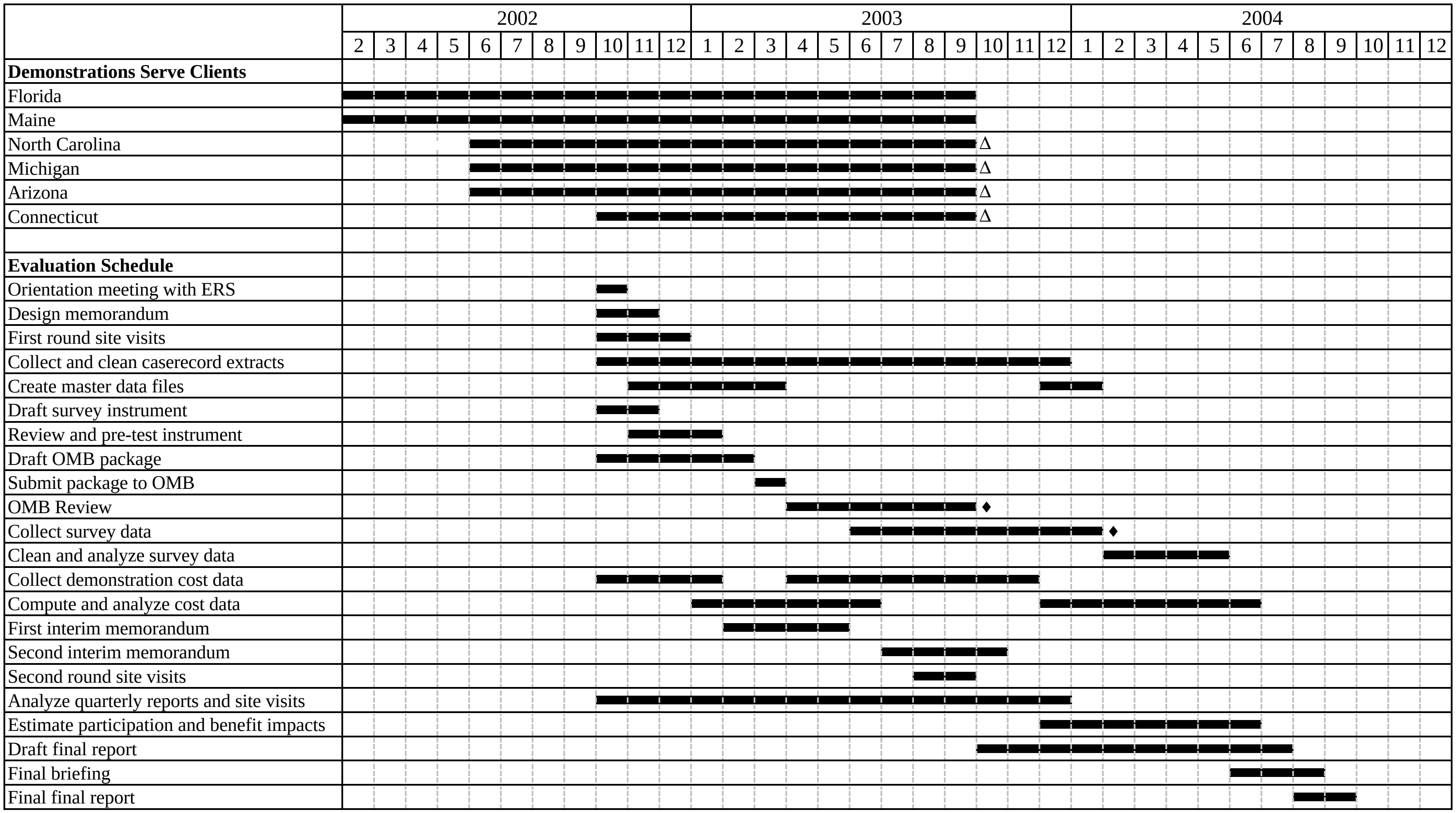
The evaluation of the elderly nutrition demonstrations should be flexible because much about the demonstrations is unknown at the design stage. For instance, as of this writing we do not know the exact month in which four of the six demonstrations will begin serving clients. We also do not know when the demonstrations will end. While the demonstrations are currently scheduled to run through a two-year grant period (which ends in September 2003), they may operate for all or part of a third grant year (which ends in September 2004). Finally, we cannot predict how long the OMB review process, which is required for the client satisfaction surveys and focus groups, will be.

Recognizing these uncertainties and others, in this report we present one evaluation schedule for a two-year grant period (Figure II.1 and Table II.1) and another evaluation schedule for an extended grant period (Figure II.2). For both schedules, we assume that the evaluation will begin in October 2002. We also acknowledge that additional adjustments may be needed to accommodate events such as an unusually long OMB review period or delays in receiving data from some of the demonstrations. In the rest of this chapter we discuss key tasks, the schedules for completing key tasks, and anticipated issues or difficulties for each of the evaluation components:

- Impact on participation and benefits
- Client satisfaction
- Quantifying the costs of the demonstrations
- Implementation experiences and effects of the demonstration on key stakeholders, and
- Meetings, design memorandum, and project management

FIGURE II.1

ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATION AND EVALUATION SCHEDULE
TWO-YEAR DEMONSTRATION GRANT




ΔStart date for demonstrations in North Carolina, Michigan, Arizona, and Connecticut are uncertain (as of April 2002).
♦ End of OMB review period and start of survey data collection are uncertain (as of April 2002). OMB review typically takes three to six months.

This schedule assumes that the evaluators receive data in a timely manner and that OMB clearance is received in a timely manner.
The evaluation schedule should be adjusted if there are delays.

TABLE II.1

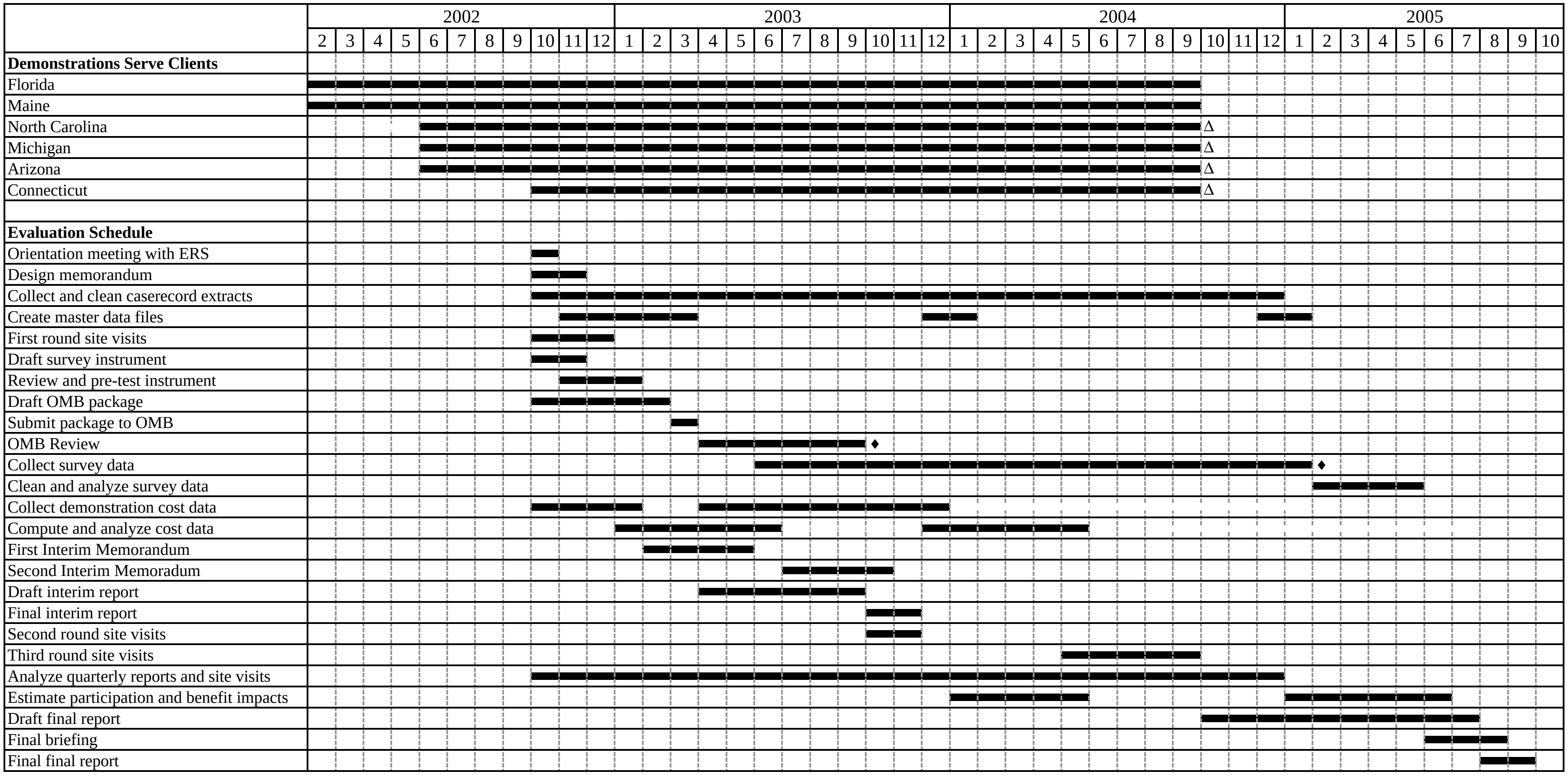
EVALUATION SCHEDULE

| Item | Two-Year Grant | Grant Extension |
|---|---|---|
| Orientation meeting agenda | October 2002 | October 2002 |
| Orientation meeting | October 2002 | October 2002 |
| Design memorandum | November 2002 | November 2002 |
| Draft survey instrument | November 8, 2002 | November 8, 2002 |
| Site visits (first round) | December 2002 | December 2002 |
| Pre-test survey | Early January 2003 | Early January 2003 |
| Draft OMB package | February 2003 | February 2003 |
| OMB submission | March 2003 | March 2003 |
| Survey data collection (beginning of first quarter) | June - Sept 2003 | June - Sept 2003 |
| Draft First Interim Memorandum | May 2003 | May 2003 |
| Final First Interim Memorandum | June 2003 | June 2003 |
| Draft Second Interim Memorandum | October 2003 | October 2003 |
| Final Second Interim Memorandum | November 2003 | November 2003 |
| Draft Interim Report | n.a. | September 2003 |
| Final Interim Report | n.a. | November 2003 |
| Site visits (second round) | September 2003 | November 2003 |
| Focus groups | September 2003 | November 2003 |
| Site visits (third round) | n.a. | September 2004 |
| Survey data collection (beginning of final quarter) | Nov 2003 - Jan 2004 | Nov 2004 – Jan 2005 |
| Draft Final Report | July 2004 | July 2005 |
| Final briefing | August 2004 | August 2005 |
| Final Final Report | September 2004 | September 2005 |
| Monthly Progress Reports | | |

NOTES: n.a means “not applicable.” The two-year demonstration grant period ends in September 2003. The grants may be extended to permit each demonstration to serve clients for two years (so that the demonstrations end between February 2004 and September 2004) or all grants may be extended through September 2004. The schedule assumes that the evaluators receive data from the sites in a timely manner (as specified in Appendix B of the Evaluation Plan Report) and that OMB clearance is received in a timely manner. The evaluation schedule should be adjusted if there are delays in receiving OMB clearance or in receiving data from the demonstrations.

FIGURE II.2

ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATION AND EVALUATION SCHEDULE
DEMONSTRATION GRANT EXTENDED UP TO ONE YEAR




ΔStart date for demonstrations in North Carolina, Michigan, Arizona, and Connecticut are uncertain (as of April 2002).
♦End of OMB review period and start of survey data collection are uncertain (as of April 2002). OMB review typically takes three to six months.

The schedule assumes that the evaluators receive data in a timely manner and that OMB clearance is received in a timely manner.
The evaluation schedule should be adjusted if there are delays.

## A. IMPACT ON PARTICIPATION AND BENEFITS

A key measure of the success of the elderly nutrition pilot demonstrations will be their impact on FSP participation. The evaluators will need to determine how each demonstration affects the number of elderly that participate in the programs, and whether different demonstrations are effective at reaching different subgroups of elderly individuals. Additionally, the evaluators will need to determine whether the average benefit paid to elderly participants changes as individuals eligible for higher than or lower than average benefits are attracted to the demonstrations. By conducting consistent but separate evaluations for each demonstration, the evaluators then can determine which demonstration models have the largest impacts on elderly participation.

In the design report a pre-post comparison group methodology is developed for evaluating the impacts of the demonstrations on participation and benefits. For each demonstration site, we have identified a set of similar comparison sites. The patterns of elderly participation observed in the comparison sites will serve as a proxy for the participation patterns that would have happened in the demonstration site if the demonstration were never implemented. The evaluators will compare the participation patterns in the demonstration site over the course of the demonstration with the participation patterns in the comparison sites over the same period to generate an estimate of how the demonstrations affect elderly participation.

In designing the impact analysis, we had three overreaching objectives.

1. ***To ensure the impact estimates can be consistently derived across all sites.*** This will facilitate cross-site comparisons to determine whether the different demonstration models have different impacts.

2. ***To specify a rigorous sensitivity analysis of the findings.*** Since the impacts will be measured through a nonexperimental design, a host of comparisons will be used to improve confidence in the findings. This should allow evaluators to distinguish an impact from an anomaly.

3. ***To give the evaluators flexibility.*** Many of the factors that affect elderly participation may change over the course of the demonstrations. As a result, we cannot anticipate all of the issues the evaluators may need to explore. In identifying the data needed to conduct the impact evaluation, we specify extensive data files that will give the evaluators flexibility to explore ad hoc hypotheses. Since the data files are extracts of states' electronic caserecords, and since the burden of analyzing the data will fall on the evaluators, this additional flexibility should come at a minimal cost to most of the states participating in the demonstrations.

The remainder of this section summarizes how the evaluator will complete the data collection and analysis steps for the study's impact evaluation, as well as how findings will be reported.

### 1. Data Collection

For most demonstrations, the impact evaluation primarily will employ data state electronic administrative caserecords. In the states implementing commodities demonstrations, the evaluation also will employ data on commodity package contents obtained from site staff, as well as grocery store price scan data. A primary task of the impact evaluation will be to collect, clean and prepare data from these sources.

One of the first data collection steps that the evaluator should undertake is to enter into a formal agreement with the data managers from each state. In our evaluation design, we recommend that the evaluators draft memoranda of understanding (MOU) that clarify the respective roles of the state data managers and the evaluator. For instance, the MOUs should indicate the frequency and format of data extracts that the states will provide. They also should indicate that the burden of analysis will fall on the evaluator.

As described in detail in Appendix B of the design report, the state data extracts are intended to cover all individuals participating in the FSP in up to 10 separate observation months. The first observation month is seven months before the demonstration is implemented, and the remaining observation months occur every third month after that. The last observation month will be September 2003 because it is the last month the demonstrations will serve clients.[4] All states with demonstrations active in September 2003 will be required to provide a data extract that month, regardless of the number of months since their previous extract. The total number of extracts a state provides will depend on the start date of the state's demonstration. States whose demonstrations start before April 2002 will be asked to provide 10 extracts, including one for September 2003; states that start in May 2002 or later will be asked to provide 9 or fewer extracts.

We recommend that the evaluators initially request from each site a data extract for only one quarter. In this manner, initial data checking and cleaning efforts can be focused on one extract per site. After the extract at each demonstration has been checked and data issues have been discussed with the data managers, the evaluators may request the remaining extracts.

Upon receiving each extract, the evaluator will need to thoroughly check and clean the data, as inconsistencies often exist on caserecord extracts.[5] To check the data, the evaluator should construct quality control computer programs that process the data extracts and identify inconsistencies. Because the format and content of these extracts will vary from state to state, separate quality control programs will be needed for each state. These programs should be run to check each new extract received by the evaluator. When inconsistencies arise, the evaluator will need to work with state data managers to identify the source of the inconsistency. If the problem occurred as part of the extract creation process, a timeline for creating a revised extract should be

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[4]The demonstration grant period may be extended, in which case the last month could fall between February 2004 and September 2004. The evaluator will request that states provide extracts running through the last month of each demonstration.

[5]For example, data fields may be missing for a disproportionate number of records, one record may contain separate variables with conflicting information, or records for a particular geographic region may be missing or incomplete. Many other data problems may arise as well.

established. If these inconsistencies are not caused by the extract creation process, but are deficiencies in the data (such as missing observations), the evaluator should explore adjusting for these deficiencies through extrapolation and imputation.

Most of the work in acquiring and cleaning data will occur with the first data extract received from each state. At that time, the evaluator will need to become familiar with the structure of the data set and develop quality control and data cleaning programs. Subsequent data extracts will require less work, unless there are major changes in the file structure or significant new data inconsistencies that develop in later files.

Many problems may arise in collecting data. For instance, the documentation of state data extracts may be insufficient, and the evaluator will need to work closely with the state data mangers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data extracts. Additionally, the evaluator may need to delay analysis for some states if there are substantial delays in the release of the data extract, or they may need to drop certain components of the analysis if certain variables are unavailable or unreliable.

To facilitate analysis, the evaluator should consider constructing master data files that consolidate data from the individual caserecord extracts. For example, the evaluator may construct one master data file for each state containing all records for all observation months. Whatever the design, the final master data files all should share a consistent format, should have consistent variable names, and to the extent possible, should have consistent variable definitions. Initial master data files should be constructed after the first sets of data are received from all six sites. Since the evaluation will not begin until the Fall of 2002, the first sets of data extracts will include all of the observations for the pre-start up period and multiple observations for the post-start up period. We expect the initial master data files can be created by March 2003. These initial files will be used in conjunction with initial model specifications to ensure that all of the necessary data elements have been received. The final master data files should be constructed after all data extracts have been submitted. We expect that this final file will be created in January 2004 (if the demonstrations end in September 2003).

An additional component of data collection will be to acquire the necessary data to compute the "comparable price" of the commodities packages. First, the evaluators will need to collect from commodity demonstration staff the type, quantity, weight/size and, where possible, brand of each item in the package. This information will be needed for every observation month for which the evaluators are collecting and analyzing FSP participation data. Next, the evaluators will acquire grocery store price scan data. These data are available from organizations such as Information Resources Incorporated (IRI) and A.C. Nielsen. Additionally, USDA's Economic Research Service has grocery store price data that was used for previous research, and it may be possible to use this file for this evaluation.

### 2. Data Analysis

Once the initial master data files have been constructed, the evaluator can specify the initial analysis models. These models, described in Chapter II of the design report, ultimately will be used to estimate impacts and conduct sensitivity analysis. Using the initial master data files, the evaluator should specify how to construct variables for the analytic models from the elements of the master data file. This specification process will allow the evaluator to identify any problems in data collection and/or model specification. To catch these problems early, we recommend that variable construction take place by June 2003, which is shortly after the initial master files are constructed.

In specifying the initial models, the evaluator should examine the comparison sites identified in the design report. Circumstances may have changed since the initial comparison site selection that make some comparison sites inappropriate. If one (or more) comparison site is no longer appropriate, the evaluator should consider dropping that site from the comparison group. The evaluator then should specify the basic analysis model as well as all models used for the subgroup and sensitivity analyses.

It is unlikely that the models can be estimated on the initial master data file, as insufficient observations will exist. Rather, that file should be used to specify and construct the exogenous variables in the models. Model estimation can occur after the final master data files have been constructed in January 2004.

As part of the model specification process, the evaluator will need to specify the comparable price valuations for the commodities packages. Since grocery prices vary geographically, and since the price scan databases contain data from across the country, the first step will be to determine which geographic regions and/or grocery stores to use to value commodities for each demonstration site. Next, the evaluator will need to identify the appropriate grocery items in the price scan database to match against items in the commodities packages. If inexact matches exist (e.g., commodities participants receive a 1 lb bag of a good that is usually sold in 10 oz quantities), the evaluator will need to specify the best way to use grocery store price scan data to pro-rate the prices for those goods. Finally, if older price scan data are used in this analysis, the evaluator will need to specify how the prices should be adjusted to account for inflation.

### 3. Reporting Results

Findings from the impact analysis will appear in two interim memoranda and in the Final Report. The interim memoranda will provide ERS and FNS with preliminary results on the effects of the demonstrations on elderly FSP participation and benefits. Each memorandum will use data from three quarters before demonstration start-up and four quarters during the demonstration. The first memorandum will present preliminary findings for the two sites that started first—Florida and Maine. It will contain approximately 6 pages of text and 6 tables, and a draft should be ready by May 2003. The second memorandum will present preliminary results for the three sites that are expected to start in June 2003—Arizona, Michigan, and North Carolina. A draft of the second memorandum should be ready by October 2003.

The findings presented in the interim memoranda should be considered preliminary, since they will not be based on all of the participation and benefits data and they will not undergo a rigorous sensitivity analysis. Findings based on all of the participation and benefits data and a sensitivity analysis will be presented in the Final Report

## B. CLIENT SATISFACTION

The level of client satisfaction and awareness of the demonstrations will be measured with either a client satisfaction survey at the commodity alternative demonstration sites or with focus groups at all sites. Based on evaluation priorities and resources, ERS and FNS will determine which approach to use (or whether a combination of a survey at some sites and focus groups at some sites makes sense). If a survey is administered, the evaluators will collect data from a quarterly satisfaction survey with individuals from pure elderly households who completed an application during the previous quarter or who were recertified for food stamps.[6] Pending a decision by ERS and FNS on how to use evaluation resources for the client satisfaction analysis, focus groups may be conducted at the application assistance and simplified eligibility sites to capture the views and experiences of elderly people who start but do not complete an FSP application ("non-completers").

Based on the recommendation of ERS and FNS, the design does not include a survey of clients in comparison sites. The evaluators will not be able to conduct client satisfaction surveys

[6]At the application assistance sites, only elderly households that completed a food stamp application should be interviewed, because the application assistance pilots do not plan to help many elderly households that recertify for food stamps.

in the comparison sites because the comparison sites are not likely to agree to a survey in their service areas (or provide the data needed to draw the survey samples).

### 1. Preparing the Survey Instrument, Survey Sample, and OMB Submission

#### a. Survey Instrument

The survey will be administered by telephone. (Due to evaluation resource constraints, a mail follow-up will not be used for those who do not initially respond by telephone.) The survey will take 15 to 20 minutes to administer by telephone. We recommend that respondents who complete the telephone survey be paid $15. Proxies will be allowed for those sampled clients who appear to have cognitive difficulties. Because a large subgroup of elderly Spanish-speaking FSP participants lives in the Hartford area, the instrument will be translated into Spanish and available for use at all sites.

Since data will be collected with a telephone-only survey, we are assuming a 65 percent response rate. If, however, key staff from the alternative commodity sites educate their elderly clients about the survey and encourage them to participate in it, the participation rate could exceed 65 percent (and perhaps be closer to 70 percent). It will be important to for the sites to support the survey data collection effort, because we understand that OMB usually looks for a response rate of 75 percent or more when it reviews survey data collection proposals.

A draft of the survey instrument for each pilot can be developed from the survey topics listed in Table III.3 of the design report. By November 8, 2002, a draft of the survey instrument should be ready for review by the USDA and key staff at the commodity demonstration sites. After the evaluators revise the instrument in response to comments from ERS, FNS, and the demonstrations, the instrument will be pre-tested in early January, revised, and included in the OMB submission document.

**b. Survey Sample Design**

The sample design for the client satisfaction survey should be based on both the final size of the target population in each of the demonstration sites, desired precision levels, and available resources for conducting the survey.

Table II.2 provides estimates of the quarterly and yearly sampling frame counts. Based on these values and assuming a 65 percent response rate, we recommend conducting a census in North Carolina and using a sample of the target population in Connecticut.

**c. Statistical Precision**

For the client satisfaction survey, the resulting statistical precision in the estimates will depend first on whether a census was conducted for the site, and, if not, the sample allocation plan implemented. If a census of the target population is conducted in the demonstration site, the estimates obtained are not subject to sampling variability.

In Connecticut where a sample is proposed, the estimates will be subject to some level of sampling variability. Table II.3 provides some guidelines on the expected precision levels expressed as 95 percent confidence intervals for a 50 percent characteristic (a dichotomous characteristic evenly distributed across the population) for each demonstration site.[7] In an overall sample of 500 applicants, the study would yield respectable precision levels, for an overall 50 percent characteristic ranging from plus or minus 3.3 to 4.1 percentage points depending on the level of oversampling conducted. On the other hand, given the expected small population sizes, raising the sample sizes to 750 or 1,000 substantially improves the overall study

[7]See Section C of Chapter III in Sing et al. (2002) for a complete description of how the estimates in this table are derived.

TABLE II.2

ESTIMATED APPLICANTS BY SITE AND CENSUS
VS. SAMPLING RECOMMENDATIONS

| Demonstration Site | Applicant Base | Estimated Quarterly Applications | Estimated Yearly Applicants | Current Sample Design | Target Completed Interviews (Four quarters) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Connecticut | Applicants and Recertifications | 300 | 1,200 | Sample | 520 |
| North Carolina | Applicants and Recertifications | 125 | 500 | **Census** | **325** |
| Total | | 425 | 1,700 | | 825 |

TABLE II.3

EXPECTED PRECISION LEVELS BY SITE FOR VARIOUS DESIGN EFFECTS: OVERALL AND FOR SUBGROUP ESTIMATES

| Site | Estimated Population Size | Sample Size | Option 1 No Oversampling (Design Effect =1.0) | Option 2 Minor Oversampling (Design Effect =1.1) | Option 3 Moderate Oversampling (Design Effect =1.3) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 95% Confidence Half Interval for 50 Percent Characteristic (Plus or Minus Percentage points) | | |
| Connecticut | 1,200 | **For Overall Study Estimates** | | | |
| | | 1,000 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.4 |
| | | 750 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.5 |
| | | 500 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| | | **For Subgroups At Sample Size Indicated Assuming Overall Sample Size of 500** | | | |
| | | 400 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 4.3 |
| | | 300 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.9 |
| | | 250 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 5.4 |
| | | 200 | 5.3 | 5.6 | 6.0 |
| | | 100 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 8.5 |

precision and would increase the sample sizes available for subgroup analysis, such as comparing satisfaction among those who selected the commodity option and those who did not select the commodity option.

### d. OMB Submissions

We assume that approval from OMB will be required for the client survey and the focus groups with elderly FSP applicants and non-completers. The OMB submission document will include sections that describe the project, justify the need for the survey and focus groups, discuss confidentiality, estimate burden to respondents, discuss response rates, and present procedures for collecting information. The document will also include a data collection schedule and the data collection instruments. We expect that a draft of the OMB package can be submitted to the USDA as early as February 2003. After review by ERS and FNS, we expect the OMB package can be submitted to OMB in March 2003.

OMB review can take anywhere from two months to six months or more. Table II.1 assumes that OMB approval will occur in three months (by June 2003), since many previous submissions by the USDA to OMB have been approved within three months. However, if OMB review takes more than three months, the evaluation schedule should be adjusted accordingly. As a result, if the demonstrations end in September 2003, the survey may only interview elderly FSP applicants during two calendar quarters.

## 2. Preparing to Administer the Surveys

Survey administration should begin as soon as OMB approves the survey, the evaluators obtain a survey contact database for the most recent quarter, and the evaluators send sample members an advance letter that describes the survey. The earliest realistic date for survey data collection to begin is June 2003; it will be later if OMB approval takes more than three months.

### a. Survey Contact Database

During every quarter of the demonstration, each demonstration site for which survey data will be collected should prepare a file that contains data that the evaluators will use to draw the sample and contact sample members for the survey. The file (or "sampling frame") will list all completed food stamp applications and recertifications from pure elderly households in Connecticut and North Carolina during each quarter. It will include case identification numbers so that survey data can be linked to MIS data. Within the first few months of the evaluation, the evaluators should specify the contents of the survey contact database, sign memoranda of agreement with data managers in each state, and submit a formal request for the data. (These efforts should be coordinated with data request for the state case record extracts needed to conduct the participation impact analysis.) Draft specifications for the survey contact database appear in Appendix B of the design report.

### b. Advance Letters to Clients

An advance letter to prospective survey respondents that describes the survey should be drafted and reviewed by the USDA and each site before OMB approval is obtained. A separate advance letter will be used for each site. At each site, the advance letters should be signed by a representative from the local, regional, or state food stamp office or a representative from the grantee's nonprofit partner. The letter should assure clients that their participation in the survey is voluntary, and that their responses (if they participate) will be confidential, and that eligible households will be paid for participating in the survey.

## 3. Administering the Survey

Once OMB approval is obtained, we recommend administering the survey every quarter with recent applicants. So, for example, if the first round of survey data collection would begin in June 2003 at each site, the next two rounds of interviews would begin in September 2003 and December 2003. For each quarterly data collection period, a new sample will be drawn of elderly clients who recently completed an FSP application.[8] Survey respondents will be asked to recall very recent experiences with the pilot, and their responses will be more accurate and detailed as a result. The evaluators will also be more likely to receive accurate telephone numbers and addresses for the survey respondents if data are provided shortly after the respondents' applications or recertifications are received.

### 4. Focus Groups

Due to evaluation resource constraints, ERS and FNS may decide to assess client satisfaction with focus groups at all sites instead of with a client survey. These focus groups would be conducted with elderly applicants at all sites and with elderly people who recertify at the commodity alternative and simplified eligibility sites. In addition, the evaluators will conduct focus groups with elderly households in Arizona, Florida, Maine, and Michigan that started but did not complete an FSP application.

The focus groups can be conducted during the same week, if possible, in which the evaluators are conducting their second round of site visits for the process analysis (September or November 2003, depending on whether the demonstrations end in September 2003 or are extended beyond September 2003). By this time, OMB clearance should be obtained and the evaluators should have requested and received lists from the pilots of households that applied/recertified and that started but did not complete an application.

[8]Clients who are selected for two different samples—such as for the June 2003 and December 2003 samples in the example above—will be interviewed once.

### 5. Data Analysis and Reporting Results

After the survey data have been collected, they should be cleaned and reviewed. Next, the evaluators should prepare separate survey weights for each commodity alternative pilot to account for differences in the selection probabilities of various applicant types and for potential differences between the profile of respondents and the target population that could result from survey nonresponse. These weights can be adjusted to account differences in the response patterns across the characteristics of the sampled members. With this approach, the weights would provide for unbiased estimation from the sample for means, totals and percentages.

The survey data will be analyzed using univariate and multivariate techniques. A qualitative analysis will conducted with data from the focus groups. Findings will be reported in the project's Draft Final Report.[9]

### 6. Anticipated Issues or Difficulties

There are three primary issues pertaining to the analysis of client satisfaction:

- ***If ERS and FNS decide to assess client satisfaction with a survey at the commodity alternative sites, additional data on client satisfaction can be collected through a survey or focus groups at one additional site, subject to the availability of evaluation funds and to the evaluation priorities of ERS and FNS.*** Once the high start-up costs of administering a survey (such as preparing and programming the instrument and preparing the OMB clearance package) are incurred, the marginal costs of collecting data through a survey are relatively low. If sufficient evaluation funds are available, and if ERS and FNS would like to learn more about client satisfaction, a survey or some focus groups could be conducted at an additional site.

- ***If ERS and FNS decide to conduct a survey at the commodity alternative sites and additional resources are available for this analysis, including a mail follow-up to the survey will yield a higher response rate.*** With a telephone-only survey and

[9] If the demonstrations are extended, we recommend that the evaluators prepare an Interim Report (see Table II.1). Findings from the survey analysis will not be included in the Interim Report because the Interim Report is due at approximately the same time that the first quarter of survey data will be collected.

respondent payments of $15, we assume a 65 percent response rate. This response rate may exceed 65 percent if key staff at the demonstration sites educate their elderly clients about the survey and encourage them to participate in it. The response rate could reach 75 percent if there is also a mail follow-up. However, there are significant costs to including a mail follow-up to a telephone survey for an elderly population.

- ***The evaluators will not be able to collect data on client satisfaction during the first 3 to 11 months of demonstration operations (depending on the site)***. Although the demonstrations will serve clients for 12 to 20 months (if the demonstrations end in September 2003), survey data will be collected for clients who applied/recertified during the last 9 months of each demonstration. Survey data collection will begin towards the end of the two-year demonstration grant period because the evaluation will begin more than one year after the demonstration grants were awarded, and the evaluators will need at least nine months to develop the survey instrument, revise the instrument in response to comments, pre-test it, prepare the OMB submission, and wait for OMB approval. Consequently, there will be no survey data on client satisfaction from elderly households who were served by the demonstrations during their first 3 to 11 months of operations (depending on the site).

## C. QUANTIFYING COSTS

The demonstrations will generate new costs for the federal government, state and local FSP offices, and demonstration partners. The specifications for reporting these costs must identify all the important components of costs that can be quantified, such as the costs of demonstration design, staff training, publicity, changes in the administrative costs of the FSP, and changes in food stamp benefits due to the demonstrations. The costs of volunteer time should also be estimated. The objective of the cost analysis is to quantify, to the extent possible, the Federal, State, and local administrative costs of the demonstrations.

### 1. Data Collection Methods

#### a. Federal FSP Costs

To quantify the effect of the demonstrations on the federal FSP program, the evaluators will need to measure (1) the change in the amount of FSP benefits paid due to the demonstration and (2) 50 percent of the state and local FSP's costs of administering the demonstration. To measure the change in the amount of FSP benefits paid, the evaluators will collect and analyze data from the Quarterly Reports submitted by the demonstrations. Specifically, they will collect data on the monthly number of elderly households that participated in the FSP in the pilot and comparison areas, and the monthly total amount of FSP benefits issued to elderly households in the pilot and comparison areas. These data can be analyzed and presented in a manner similar to Table IV.1 in the design report. The approach to measuring the cost to state and local FSP offices of administering the demonstration is described below.

**b. Costs Incurred by Demonstration Partners and State and Local FSP Offices**

We recommend collecting data on the costs incurred by demonstration partners and state and local FSP offices through discussions with demonstration staff about the use of staff and other resources in implementing and operating the demonstrations. The discussions would use protocols for examining how staff time is used and how much time is required for various demonstration-related activities. This approach, sometimes referred to as the "building-up" cost estimation approach (see Ohls and Rosenberg 1999), will help ensure consistency across all sites in the way costs are measured and will make it possible to include all relevant costs.

These discussions should be supplemented with data on costs obtained from the sites' quarterly reports to USDA as well as through a set of cost worksheets completed by demonstration staff. The cost worksheets will be developed by the evaluator and should request detailed information about demonstration cost components and include instructions for filling out the worksheets.

If possible, the discussions about demonstration costs should occur in-person, during the first and second site visits. (Discussions that cannot be conducted in-person may be conducted over the telephone.) During the first visit to each site, the evaluators can collect data on the costs of demonstration implementation. During the second visit to each site, data on the ongoing costs of the demonstrations can be collected.[10]

Data on the ongoing costs of the demonstration should be collected at least nine months after the demonstrations have been operating. This gives demonstration staff an adequate amount of experience under the demonstration to estimate the amount of time staff typically spend during a day, week, or month on demonstration-related activities. If for example, the evaluators have an estimate of the number of hours all the demonstration application assistants in a particular site spend per week, on average, helping elderly clients under the demonstration, the evaluators can multiple the weekly average by the number of assistants and number of weeks under the demonstration to obtain an estimate of the total amount of time the assistants spent helping clients. This total amount of time would be multiplied by an hourly rate, fringe benefit amount, and overhead amount (if appropriate) to compute the total costs for that activity.

After the discussions, the evaluators should carefully review the cost worksheets to ensure completeness and consistency and follow up with the respondents as needed.

**2. Data Analysis and Reporting**

When the data elements from the cost worksheets are complete and internally consistent, the data can be entered into an Excel spreadsheet template to compute the desired unit costs by component. Estimates of the costs of implementing the demonstrations can be presented in the Interim Report (if the demonstrations end in September 2004). All cost estimates will be presented in the Final Report.

[10]Data on the on-going demonstration costs for Florida and Maine may be collected during the first site visit, since these demonstrations began in February 2002.

### 3. Anticipated Issues or Difficulties

There are two primary issues that the evaluators need to address with respect to quantifying the costs of the demonstrations. First, they will need to carefully explain their approach for estimating the value of volunteer labor, which will be an important component of the costs of the commodity alternative demonstrations. Several different hourly rates for volunteer labor can be used, and the evaluators may decide to estimate the costs of volunteer labor using two or more of these approaches. For example, volunteer labor can be valued at (1) the minimum wage, (2) the wage of laborers in the private sector doing comparable work, (3) the wage that the volunteer(s) receive through their own employment (for those who are employed), or (4) zero dollars.

Second, the evaluators will be collecting data on the implementation costs for Florida and Maine approximately nine months after these sites began serving clients. It is possible that some of the key demonstration staff may not remember in detail in November 2002 (the data collection month) the amount of time they spent performing demonstration-related activities between August 2001 and February 2002 (the months during which they implemented their demonstration).

## D. DEMONSTRATION IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTS ON STAKEHOLDERS

A process analysis will be conducted to describe the implementation experiences of the demonstrations and to examine the effects of the demonstrations on stakeholders such as the food stamp offices, nonprofit demonstration partners, and organizations that provide food assistance to low-income elderly people. The evaluators will collect data through continuous monitoring (quarterly telephone conversations with a few key demonstration staff), annual in-person site visits, and review of the Quarterly Reports submitted by the demonstrations.

### 1. Quarterly Reports, Continuous Monitoring, and Site Visit Preparations

During the first month of the evaluation, which we assume is October 2002, the evaluators should review all Quarterly Reports submitted by each demonstration, initiate the quarterly telephone conversations with key demonstration staff, prepare a list of topics for each site visit for review by ERS and FNS, and schedule site visits for November and early December. The quarterly telephone conversations provide an opportunity for the evaluators to follow-up on issues presented in the demonstrations' Quarterly Reports. At minimum, the evaluators should speak with someone from the food stamp office who oversees the demonstration and someone from a demonstration partner who oversees demonstration operations. If the Quarterly Reports are written in sufficient detail and submitted on time, the quarterly telephone conversations will probably be brief.

### 2. Site Visits and Focus Groups

Each site visit should be conducted by one of the study's principal investigators and a research analyst. With a two-person site visit team, the evaluators are more likely to collect accurate notes and to ensure that all research questions are addressed. The site visit team should ensure that all the research questions specified in Tables V.1 through V.6 in the evaluation design report and in the list of site visit topics are addressed either through the Quarterly Reports, quarterly telephone conversations, or site visits.

#### a. First Round of Site Visits

The first round of site visits should be scheduled for November and December of 2002. They should focus on collecting data on the implementation experiences of each site. In addition, the site visit team can collect data on the costs of implementing each demonstration (as described in Section C above). For Florida and Maine, the evaluators also have the option of collecting data on the on-going costs of serving clients in the demonstration. (The remaining sites will not have served clients long enough to collect data on on-going costs during the first site visit.)

**b. Focus Groups and Second and Third Rounds of Site Visits**

A second and final site visit will be conducted at each site in August or September 2003 if the demonstrations end in September 2003. If each demonstration is extended for an additional year (through September 2004), we recommend a second site visit to each pilot in October-November 2003 and a final site visit to each pilot during the last month of the demonstration. If each demonstration is extended to permit them to serve clients for two years, we recommend one additional ("final") site visit to Maine and Florida (which would end during February 2004) and two additional site visits (a second round site visit and a "final" site visit) to Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, and Michigan. For the latter four sites, the second round of site visits would occur during the fall or 2003, and the final site visit would occur during their final month of operation (which is currently expected to be June 2004).

During the second site visit, the evaluators will focus on collecting data on the effects of the demonstration on stakeholders. While the evaluators are visiting each site, they can also conduct focus groups to assess client satisfaction at that site (if ERS and FNS decide to use focus groups for this analysis). One evaluator will facilitate the discussion, and the other evaluator will observe, take notes, and handle the logistics (such as tape recording). At the end of each session, each respondent will be given a cash honorarium for participating.

Due to evaluation resource constraints and research priorities at ERS and FNS, there will be no focus group discussions with alternative food service providers. To examine the effects of the demonstrations on alternative food assistance providers, the evaluators will speak with representatives of these providers on the telephone or in person during the site visits.

### 3. Analysis and Reporting Results

It is critical that the data for the process analysis, which will be collected through different strategies and from different sources, be analyzed as a whole. Thus, the data analysis should triangulate sources and perspectives by using data from multiple sources to validate findings. To aid the evaluators in data analysis, we recommend use of a qualitative software package such as Atlas.ti to store, code, and analyze the data. Qualitative data management and analysis software packages can be used to systematically code notes from discussions with stakeholders, and queries of the database can be used to help formulate conclusions.

Findings on the implementation experiences of the demonstrations will be reported in the Interim Report. An Interim Report will be submitted only if the demonstrations are extended beyond September 2003. Findings on the implementation experiences and the effects of the demonstrations on stakeholders will be reported in the Final Report.

### 4. Issues for the Evaluation

A major difficulty for the process analysis will be collecting complete data on the implementation experiences of each demonstration because in most cases, the data will be collected up to nine months later than the optimal data collection period. Ideally, a site visit that collects data on a demonstration's implementation experiences should occur within a month or two after the demonstration begins serving clients. For Florida and Maine, which began serving clients in February 2002, it would have been ideal to conduct a site visit in February 2002, when key demonstration staff are able to describe in detail their recent implementation experiences and the issues they tackled. Instead, these site visits will probably occur in November 2002, which is nine months later. Although demonstration staff in Florida and Maine can record their implementation experiences in their Quarterly Reports to FNS, these reports may not yield the detail and the follow-up discussion that a site visit in February 2002 would yield. Three of the sites—North Carolina, Michigan, and Arizona—anticipate that they will start serving clients by June 2002 (although this start date may slip by a few months). Only Connecticut anticipates starting at the same time that the evaluation starts.

## E. MEETINGS, DESIGN MEMORANDUM, AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Within the first month of the evaluation, if possible, the evaluators should schedule an orientation meeting with ERS. During this meeting, ERS and the evaluators can discuss the evaluation objectives and key changes since the evaluation design report was written. After the orientation meeting, the evaluators will prepare a brief design memorandum that documents changes in the evaluation design since the design report was written and summarizes decisions made during the orientation meeting.

Every month the evaluators should prepare a monthly progress report to ERS that describes project activities conducted during the previous month, discusses activities anticipated for the following month, and discusses problems encountered (if any).

The evaluators will conduct a final briefing with ERS and FNS after the Draft Final Report has been submitted. This briefing will present findings from the evaluation.

# III. EVALUATION COST ESTIMATES

This chapter presents the estimated costs of conducting the evaluation of the Elderly Nutrition Demonstration, as described in the evaluation design report and chapter II of this report. We present cost estimates that address two key design options:

- Whether the demonstrations end in September 2003 (the "Baseline" budget), are extended to permit them to serve clients for two years (the "Option A" budget), or are extended until September 2004 (the "Option B" budget)
- Whether the client satisfaction analysis is conducted with a survey at the commodity alternative sites or with focus group discussions at all sites

It is important to keep in mind that the estimates presented in this chapter rely on a number of assumptions that are based on MPR's experience conducting similar evaluations. We describe the cost assumptions in the first section of this chapter. The second section discusses the cost estimates.

## A. EVALUATION COST ASSUMPTIONS

Our cost estimates are based on the price schedule by labor category for the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Project (FANRP) Master Contract, as well as typical assumptions about overhead and other direct costs.

We assume that the evaluation will begin in October 2002. If the demonstrations end in September 2003, the cost estimates assume that the evaluation will end in September 2004 (see Figure II.1 in Chapter II). The estimated costs for this scenario, called the "baseline costs" are presented in Tables III.1 and III.2 for 13 separate evaluation activities. If the demonstrations are extended (either Option A or Option B), the cost estimates assume that the evaluation will end in

TABLE III.1

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF EVALUATING THE ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATIONS
OPTION WITH CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY AT COMMODITY SITES—NO FOCUS GROUPS
(In Dollars)

| Study Task | Baseline Budget[a] | Additional Costs Option A[b] | Additional Costs Option B[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Analysis of participation and benefits | $140,000 - $160,000 | $40,000 - $50,00 | $45,000 - $55,000 |
| Two interim memoranda—analysis of FSP participation and benefits | $25,000 - $30,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey Design (instrumentation, programming, sample design, and sample frame) | 110,000 - 130,000 | 6,000 – 8,000 | 6,000 – 8,000 |
| OMB submission | 40,000 – 60,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey data collection | 150,000 - 160,000 | 185,000 – 205,000 | 190,000 – 210,000 |
| Survey data processing, weighting, and analysis | 90,000 - 100,000 | 30,000 – 40,000 | 30,000 – 40,000 |
| Conduct and analyze focus groups | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Quantify costs | 120,000 - 140,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 |
| Process analysis | 310,000 - 340,000 | 130,000 - 140,000 | 180,000 - 200,000 |
| Interim Report | N/A | 75,000 - 85,000 | 75,000 - 85,000 |
| Final Report | 100,000 - 110,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Orientation meeting, design memorandum, and final briefing | 45,000 - 55,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Project management | 25,000 - 35,000 | 15,000 – 25,000 | 15,000 - 25,000 |
| **TOTAL** | $1,200,000 - $1,300,000 | $500,000 - $550,000 | $550,000 - $620,000 |

NOTE: The assumptions used to compute these cost estimates, such as survey sample sizes, are described in this report.

[a]Demonstrations end in September 2003
[b]Demonstrations end after serving clients for two years (February 2004 through September 2004, depending upon the site).
[c]Demonstrations end in September 2004

TABLE III.2

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF EVALUATING THE ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATIONS
OPTION WITH CLIENT SATISFACTION FOCUS GROUPS—NO SURVEY
(In Dollars)

| Study Task | Baseline Budget[a] | Additional Costs Option A[b] | Additional Costs Option B[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Analysis of participation and benefits | $140,000 - $160,000 | $40,00 - $50,00 | $45,000 - $55,000 |
| Two interim memoranda—analysis of FSP participation and benefits | 25,000 - 30,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey Design (instrumentation, programming, sample design, and sample frame) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OMB submission | 40,000 – 60,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey data collection | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Survey data processing, weighting, and analysis | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Conduct and analyze focus groups | 190,000 – 210,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Quantify costs | 120,000 - 140,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 | 3,000 - 5,000 |
| Process analysis | 310,000 - 340,000 | 130,000 - 140,000 | 180,000 - 200,000 |
| Interim Report | N/A | 75,000 - 85,000 | 75,000 - 85,000 |
| Final Report | 100,000 - 110,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Orientation meeting, design memorandum, and final briefing | 45,000 - 55,000 | See baseline budget | See baseline budget |
| Project management | 25,000 - 35,000 | 15,000 – 25,000 | 15,000 - 25,000 |
| **TOTAL** | $1,000,000 - $1,100,000 | $270,000 - $300,000 | $330,000 - $360,000 |

NOTE: The assumptions used to compute these cost estimates, such as survey sample sizes, are described in this report.

[a]Demonstrations end in September 2003
[b]Demonstrations end after serving clients for two years (February 2004 through September 2004, depending upon the site).
[c]Demonstrations end in September 2004

September 2005. The additional estimated costs of the evaluation under Options A and B are presented in the last two columns of Tables III.1 and III.2.

This section describes the cost assumptions separately for each demonstration activity listed in Tables III.1 and III.2. Many of the activities that will be performed in each task are described in more detail in Chapter II of this report.

### 1. Analysis of Participation and Benefits

A pre-post comparison group methodology will be used to estimate the effects of the demonstration on elderly FSP participation and benefits. Our cost estimates assume that this analysis will be conducted by a senior analyst who is working closely with a senior computer programmer and a research analyst.

The preliminary activities conducted by the evaluators include preparation and execution of a memorandum of understanding, submission of a formal data request, confirmation of the comparison sites selected, and cleaning and checking the caserecord extracts. We assume that considerable time may be spent discussing the data extracts with data managers at some sites, particularly if there are problems such as missing observations, insufficient data documentation, or changes in a site's information system during the evaluation.

We assume that the grocery store price scan data needed for the analysis of FSP benefits will be obtained from ERS, based on preliminary conversations we had with ERS staff. The evaluators will match items in the grocery store price scan data with items in the commodity packages available to clients in the same months for which data on FSP participation and benefits are submitted to the evaluators. If items do not match (for example, the grocery store data may contain a price for a 10 ounce can of pineapple but the commodity package may contain a 16 ounce can), then evaluators will develop an approach to pro-rate the grocery store price scan data to compute a comparable price for the relevant commodity package items.

Finally, this task includes time for the evaluators to analyze the data, and time for senior staff to oversee and review the analysis. The costs of reporting the findings of this analysis (and all other analyses) are presented separately in the Interim and Final Report tasks.

Our cost estimates are based on two key assumptions that may change during the evaluation. First, we assume that the evaluators have experience (or have access to someone with experience) using electronic case records from state Management Information System (MIS) data. Second, we assume that the evaluators will be able to use grocery store price scan data obtained from ERS. If these assumptions are not true, the costs of this analysis will be higher. Additional labor hours will be needed for the evaluators to become familiar with state MIS data. Additional funds will be needed for the evaluators to purchase grocery store price scan data, and additional labor hours will be needed to acquire these data from a vendor.

### 2. Survey Design Option

Our cost estimates for the client survey design option assume that a survey will be conducted at the two commodity alternative sites to collect data on client satisfaction and awareness of the demonstrations. The survey will be by telephone.

The survey design includes developing the survey instrument, computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) program for the telephone version of the survey, sample design, and sample frame. A survey director and survey specialist will have primary responsibility for this task, and key tasks (such as the English and Spanish translations of the survey instrument) will be internally reviewed.

The evaluator will develop two different survey instruments (one for each commodity alternative demonstration). The instruments will be site-specific variants of a "master" survey instrument. The evaluators will ask ERS, FNS, and demonstration staff in Connecticut and North Carolina to review a draft of the survey instruments. After the instruments have been reviewed, they will be pretested, revised, and translated into Spanish. The project director will review the survey instrument during its development.

The sample design and sample frame will be developed and extracted by a sampling statistician and a survey specialist.

### 3. OMB Submission

The OMB submission document will include the two survey instruments or the focus group protocols (depending upon whether ERS and FNS decide to use a survey or focus groups to assess client satisfaction). It will be written by the survey director, project director, research analyst, survey specialist, and sampling statistician (if there is a survey). We assume the evaluators will prepare draft and revised versions of the document.

### 4. Survey Data Collection Option

#### a. Cost Assumptions

To collect the survey data, the evaluators will develop data collection procedures, prepare an advance letter for survey sample members, develop a cover letter and materials for mail survey respondents, train interviewers, locate and contact sample members, collect the data, maintain the CATI program, and oversee data collection. We assume a 65 percent response rate. (A higher rate is possible if key staff at the commodity alternative sites educate their elderly clients about the survey and encourage eligible clients to participate.) We assume that the respondents will be paid $15. The survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete by telephone.

As part of their oversight duties, the survey director, survey specialist, and survey associate will meet weekly during the data collection period. The project director will monitor the weekly progress of the data collection and attend the interviewer training session so that he/she can explain the research objectives of the survey and directly respond to research-related questions raised by the interviewers.

To compute the number of completed interviews each quarter for each site, we assume the following sample sizes:

- 200 per quarter in Connecticut (sample)
- 125 per quarter in North Carolina (census)

The quarterly sample sizes are approximate, because the demonstration sites, in general, do not keep records of the number of FSP applicants/recertifications from pure elderly households per quarter. However, demonstration staff were asked to review our estimates, relying on their general knowledge of the number of quarterly FSP applicants.

For the baseline budget, we assume three quarters of data collection at each site, for a total of 634 completed interviews (at a 65 percent response rate). For the Option A budget, we assume three quarters of data collection in North Carolina and four quarters in Connecticut, for a total of 764 completed interviews. For the Option B budget, we assume four quarters of data collection in both sites, for a total of 845 completed interviews.

### b. Some Factors That Could Change Our Survey Data Collection Cost Estimate

Our estimated costs of data collection depend on some assumptions that could change as the evaluation progresses. For example, the estimated costs will change if:

- The quarterly sample size estimates presented above are inaccurate
- Two quarters (instead of three quarters) of data collection occur during the baseline period due to a delay in OMB approval
- Significantly more or less than 65 percent of the eligible sample members complete an interview
- The actual respondent payments are revised (for example, OMB could request a different respondent payment schedule)

When using these cost estimates, it is important to keep in mind that costs could change significantly if some of the assumptions change during the evaluation.

### 5. Survey Data Processing, Weighting, and Analysis

Survey data processing includes producing the survey data files for analysis and reviewing and cleaning the data. The cost estimates assume that these tasks will be led by a sampling statistician and the project director, with assistance from other staff, such as a survey sampling specialist, survey specialist, and programmers. The cost estimates for this line item also include developing and constructing the sampling weights and analyzing the survey data. Univariate and multivariate analyses will be conducted with the survey data.

### 6. Option to Conduct and Analyze Focus Groups

If ERS and FNS decide to assess client satisfaction with focus groups, the budget assumes an average of two focus groups per site with clients (for a total of 12 focus groups) and eight focus groups with noncompleters (two groups for each of the application assistance and simplified eligibility sites). The evaluators will develop a protocol for each group, recruit focus group participants, travel to the site, convene the focus groups (employing a two-person team), pay participants an honoraria, arrange for and pay meeting expenses (such as renting a meeting room at a location convenient to most participants), produce transcripts for each focus group, and analyze the focus group discussions.

The focus groups will be conducted in the fall or winter of 2003, after OMB clearance has been obtained. We do not recommend conducting any focus groups during the option periods.

### 7. Quantify Costs of the Demonstrations

To quantify the costs of the demonstrations, the evaluators will compile monthly benefit data from the Quarterly Reports submitted by the demonstrations, prepare cost worksheets for each site, and use in-person discussions and follow-up telephone calls with key demonstration staff to help demonstration staff complete the worksheets. After the worksheets have been completed, the evaluators will review the completed cost worksheets and follow-up with demonstration staff, as needed, to make any final corrections or additions to the worksheet. When the worksheets have been correctly completed, the evaluators will compute demonstration costs per site, and analyze these costs. The cost estimates in Table III.1 for this task assume that this task will be conducted by the project director and a research analyst.

If the demonstrations are extended, this analysis will include some additional costs to collect, review, and analyze the monthly benefit data from the Quarterly Reports submitted during the extension period.

### 8. Process Analysis

Data collection for the process analysis will be through quarterly telephone calls, annual site visits, and review of the quarterly reports submitted by the demonstrations. We assume that data will be coded and stored in a qualitative data management and analysis software package. Site visits will be conducted by one of the principal investigators and a research analyst. Twelve two-person site visits are included in the baseline budget. Four additional two-person site visits are included in the Option A budget, and six additional two-person site visits are included in the Option B budget, as explained in Chapter II. We assume that each site visit will take approximately two business days (excluding travel time to the site). We include time for the evaluators to prepare for each site visit, which will include activities such as scheduling the visit and identifying discussion topics for each informant. To compute the site visit travel costs, we use current airfares from the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Significant changes in airfares during the evaluation period (or travel from a different metropolitan area) will have an effect on the costs of the process analysis.

## 9. Interim Memoranda

The evaluators will prepare two interim memoranda that will present preliminary findings on the effects of the demonstrations on FSP participation and benefits for the elderly. The first memoranda will present findings for the two demonstrations that started in February 2002, and the second memoranda will present findings for the three demonstrations that are expected to start in June 2002. Seven quarters of data will be analyzed for each site.

The memoranda will be prepared by a senior analyst and senior programmer. Since the memoranda may be read by an Undersecretary of USDA, it will be carefully reviewed by the project director and a senior researcher who did not conduct the analysis but who is familiar with the issues and methods.

## 10. Interim Report

We recommend that the evaluators prepare an Interim Report if the demonstrations are extended. The Interim Report will primarily report findings on the implementation experiences of the sites and the costs of implementing each demonstration. The analyses of FSP participation, FSP benefits, and client satisfaction will not be far enough along to be included in an Interim Report.

The cost estimate for the Interim Report includes estimates of the costs of writing an initial draft of the report, internally reviewing the draft, and responding to one round of comments from ERS, FNS, and key staff from each demonstration. The Interim Report will be written by the project director, senior analyst, and research analyst, with assistance from a research assistant, secretary, and editor.

### 11. Final Report

The Final Report will contain findings for the entire evaluation. The cost estimate for the Final Report includes estimates of the costs of writing an initial draft of the report, internally reviewing the draft, and responding to one round of comments from ERS, FNS, and key staff from each demonstration. The prices we use to estimate the cost of the Final Report are the prices in effect if the report is completed in September 2004. If the demonstration grant period is extended, then the Final Report will be completed in the fall of 2005. The cost of delivering the Final Report in 2005 will be higher because higher labor prices should be used to compute the costs.

### 12. Orientation Meeting, Design Memorandum, and Final Briefing

During the evaluation we propose an orientation meeting, a design memorandum, and a final briefing. The orientation meeting should be scheduled within the first month of the evaluation to discuss the evaluation objectives and key changes since the evaluation design report was written. We assume that the study's two principal investigators, the survey director, the sampling statistician (if the survey option is selected by ERS and FNS), and a research analyst will attend the orientation meeting.

After the orientation meeting the evaluators will prepare a brief design memorandum that documents changes in the evaluation design since the design report was written and other key issues pertaining to the evaluation. This memorandum can also document decisions made during the orientation meeting.

The evaluators will conduct a final briefing with ERS after the Draft Final Report has been submitted. The final briefing will present findings from the evaluation. We assume that the briefing will be conducted by four members of the evaluation team.

### 13. Project management

Every month the evaluators will submit a monthly progress report to ERS that describes project activities conducted during the previous month, discusses activities anticipated for the following month, and discusses problems encountered (if any). The evaluators will also review costs billed to the project each month to check for errors or problems. We assume that the project director and a research analyst will perform these activities. During the survey or focus group data collection period, the survey director will also review the costs billed to the project.

## B. TOTAL EVALUATION COSTS

We estimate that the total costs of conducting this evaluation will be approximately $1,200,000 to $1,300,000 if the demonstrations operate through September 2003 and a survey at the commodity alternative sites is used to assess client satisfaction (Table III.1). If focus groups at all sites are used to assess client satisfaction during the baseline period, we estimate that the evaluation will cost approximately $1,000,000 to $1,100,000 (Table III.2). Under Option A, the additional costs of the evaluation will be approximately $500,000 to $550,000 under the survey option, and $270,000 to 300,000 under the focus group option. Under Option B, the additional costs of the evaluation will be approximately $550,000 to $620,000 under the survey option, and $330,000 to $360,000 under the focus group option.

The survey data collection cost estimates are based on a set of assumptions, such as sample size, that are likely to change during the evaluation as more information about the demonstrations becomes available. The process analysis task assumes that four site visits will be conducted under Option A, and that six will be conducted under Option B.

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# APPENDIX A

# REVISIONS TO THE EVALUATION DESIGN

Since the completion of the final design report in January 2002, some circumstances have changed, requiring minor revisions to the evaluation design. These revisions include: (1) the addition of Arizona as the sixth demonstration state, (2) the completion of the comparison site selection process for Michigan, and (3) clarifications to the data specifications. This appendix describes these revisions.

## A. ADDITION OF ARIZONA

In February 2002, Arizona entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA to implement an application assistance demonstration. Arizona's application assistance program will be implemented in Yavapai and Pinal counties, which are two rural counties located near Maricopa County. The demonstration plans to hire ten application assistants who will provide FSP pre-screening and application assistance on-site at Arizona's Department of Economic Security offices and in places where seniors gather, such as senior centers, housing projects, food banks, and faith-based organizations. The application assistants will be hired through the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP). As a result, assistants will be similar to the FSP applicants in terms of age and income. The demonstration also intends to distribute information about the FSP and nutrition education materials at grocery stores, pharmacies, and community events. Staff from the Arizona Nutrition Network and the Aging & Adult Administration will oversee the development and distribution of the nutrition education materials. Table A.1 contains a list of stakeholders in Arizona.

The two demonstration counties are somewhat similar in characteristics. In Pinal County over 600 elderly individuals received food stamp participants in September 2001, an increase of 11 percent from the previous year (Table A.2). Approximately 2 percent of the county's elderly population participates in the FSP. The total county population is 16 percent age 65 and older, 30 percent nonwhite and there are 34 people per square mile. In Yavapai County, almost 450 elderly individuals received food stamps in September 2001, an increase of 15 percent from the previous year (Table A.3). Approximately 1.2 percent of the county's elderly population participates in the FSP. The county is 22 percent age 65 and older, 8 percent nonwhite and there are 21 people per square mile.

The comparison group for Pinal County includes Yuma and Gila counties. These two counties served an average of 482 elderly FSP participants in September 2001, an increase of 5.5 percent from the previous year, and approximately 2.4 percent of their total elderly population. The counties are, on average, 18 percent nonwhite, 27 percent age 65 and older and have 20 people per square mile.

The comparison county for Yavapai County is Mohave County. Mohave County had 663 elderly FSP participants in September 2001, an increase of 13 percent from the previous year, and approximately 2.1 percent of the county's elderly population. The county is 21 percent age 65 and older, 10 percent nonwhite and has 12 people per square mile.

## B. COMPARISON SITES FOR MICHIGAN

Due to delays in receiving participation data for Michigan, the final comparison group was not established in time to be included in the January 2002 design report. Since then, we have completed the comparison site selection for Michigan (Table A.4).

Michigan's application assistance demonstration will be implemented in Genesee County. In 2001, there were more than 2,500 elderly FSP participants in Genesee County, about 3 percent of the county's total elderly population, and an increase of 8.6 percent from the previous year. The county is 24.7 percent nonwhite, and 11.6 percent of the population is age 65 or older. There are 682 people per square mile in Genesee County.

The comparison group includes five counties: Saginaw, Ingham, Muskegon, Berrien, and Kalamazoo.[11] On average, the comparison counties have fewer elderly FSP participants (1,187) than Genesee County, but about the same proportion of all elderly individuals that participate in the FSP (2.7 percent). Elderly participation in the FSP increased by an average of 7.5 percent in the comparison counties. The counties are on average 19.9 percent nonwhite, 12.3 percent age 65 or older, and have about 360 people per square mile.

As with all states, sensitivity analysis should be conducted on the impact estimates for Michigan. This sensitivity analysis should begin by examining the next tier of similar sites – those with low similarity index scores but that are not in the initial comparison group. There also is a second set of sites that should be examined in the sensitivity analysis. Because Michigan's demonstration builds upon the existing MiCAFE on-line application system, a second set of special comparisons sites should be drawn from those counties that have the MiCAFE system in place. The presence or absence of the MiCAFE application may affect elderly participation patterns in the absence of the Elderly Nutrition Demonstration because the application currently prescreens for other nutrition programs and may include some FSP related outreach. It may be the case that the outreach associated with the MiCAFE application is driving the FSP participation trends. To test this hypothesis, the evaluation should compare participation patterns in Genesee County with the average adjusted patterns in other, similar Project FRESH counties.

A second special issue in Michigan is that the city of Saginaw is currently implementing a variety of FSP outreach strategies through a demonstration project. This demonstration does not target directly the elderly. Rather, it targets low-income families with children, former TANF

[11]Chippewa County, which has a low similarity index score, is not included in the comparison group because the county is extremely rural, located in the Upper Peninsula, and the minorities are predominantly Native American, making it a poor match for Genesee County.

recipients, and able-bodied adults. Nevertheless, elderly participation patterns in Saginaw County, which is included in the comparison group, could be affected by this demonstration. However, the evaluators should examine whether elderly participation patterns in Saginaw County are distinctly different from patterns in the other comparison counties.

## C. CLARIFICATIONS FOR DATA SPECIFICATIONS

The data specifications for the caserecord extracts and survey contact database appear in Appendix B of the design report. After discussing the data specifications with representatives from some of the demonstration states, we identified the following issues that warrant clarification:

- ***Caserecord Extracts – number of observation months***. Assuming the evaluation period ends in September 2003, there can be at most 10, not 11, observation months. For all demonstrations, there will be three observation months covering the period before each demonstration begins serving clients. Demonstrations that begin in February 2002 will have seven additional observation months, for a total of 10 observations months. Demonstrations that begin after March 2002 will have less than 10 total observation months. All states will be asked to provide an extract for September 2003, regardless of the month of their previous extract.[12]

- ***Caserecord Extracts – data for entire state.*** Some state data managers have expressed concern that providing data on all FSP caserecords poses undue burden. The rational for collecting data on all FSP cases is that the evaluation will need to compare elderly participation patterns with nonelderly patterns in the pilot and comparison counties. However, the amount of information needed about households without elderly is much less than the amount needed about households with elderly . Since the large number of caserecords records requested is a source of burden for some states, we can give states the option to provide fewer caserecords if they provide some additional tabulations. Specifically, the options are:

  (1) provide electronic caserecords for all FSP households in the state (and let the evaluator construct tabulations of nonelderly households)

  (2) provide electronic caserecords for all households with elderly in the state, and provide a set of tabulations summarizing participation patterns by county for nonelderly households

[12]This will change if the evaluation period is extended beyond September 2003.

States should choose the option that minimizes their burden given the design of their MIS and staff availability. If states choose option 2, the tabulations provided will need to show the number of participants and households, as well as the amount of benefits received, for all FSP households. The tabulations will need to show participation counts by county and by subgroup (such as nonelderly households, households with disabled, single person households, etc.). States that choose this option will need to work with the evaluator who will specify all of the requirements in the tabulations.

- ***Survey Contact Database – contents (benefit amount) during first full month after application***. One of the requested elements in the survey contact database is the "FSP benefit amount received in month of application/recertification." This is somewhat incorrect. What the database should contain is:

  > FSP benefit amount in the month of recertification; if the case has not been recertified since application, then the FSP benefit amount in the first *full month* of benefits after application

  Because some cases receive pro-rated benefits in the month of application, the original specification could lead to low benefit estimates for many households.

- ***Survey Contact Database – contents (households and units).*** Various elements requested in the survey contact database refer to either the "FSP Unit" or the "FSP Household." In this context, these terms are used interchangeably. They both refer to all individuals receiving food stamp benefits as part of the same case.

TABLE A.1

ARIZONA STAKEHOLDERS

| Stakeholder Type | Organization | Key Staff |
|---|---|---|
| Grantee | Arizona Department of Economic Security: | |
| | Family Assistance Administration | Program and project specialist |
| | | Data systems analyst |
| | | Fiscal staff |
| | Aging & Adult Administration | Staff nutritionist |
| | | Title V (Senior Community Services Employment Program) older worker unit manager |
| | | Application assistants |
| Nonprofit Partner | Arizona Nutrition Network | Community nutrition services team leader |
| Food Assistance Organizations | Association of Arizona Food Banks | Executive director |
| | Arizona Hunger Advisory Council | Chairperson |
| Other Stakeholders | Northern Arizona Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging | Director |
| | Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens Area Agency on Aging | Executive director |
| | Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Community and Family Health Services, Office of Nutrition Services | Chief, Office of Nutrition Services |
| | Resident Service coordinators —at senior housing complexes | |

TABLE A.2
SIMILARITY INDEX FOR PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA

| | | Similarity Index Components | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elderly FSP Participants | | | | | |
| County | Similarity Index | Total | Participation Rate | Percent Change in Participation | Nonwhite Population (Percent) | Age 65+ Population (Percent) | Population Density |
| Pilot County | | | | | | | |
| Pinal County | 0.0 | 638 | 2.0 | 11.1 | 29.6 | 16.2 | 33.5 |
| Comparison Group | | | | | | | |
| Yuma County | 5.5 | 756 | 2.9 | 5.9 | 31.7 | 16.5 | 29.0 |
| Gila County | 9.4 | 207 | 2.0 | 5.1 | 22.2 | 19.8 | 10.8 |
| Mean | 7.5 | 482 | 2.4 | 5.5 | 26.9 | 18.2 | 19.9 |
| Other Counties | | | | | | | |
| Pima County | 10.4 | 2,926 | 2.4 | 8.6 | 24.9 | 14.2 | 91.8 |
| Cochise County | 10.9 | 802 | 4.6 | 7.8 | 23.3 | 14.7 | 19.1 |
| Mohave County | 12.2 | 663 | 2.1 | 13.3 | 9.9 | 20.5 | 11.6 |
| Graham County | 13.1 | 173 | 4.3 | 5.5 | 32.9 | 11.9 | 7.2 |
| La Paz County | 15.6 | 95 | 1.9 | 23.4 | 25.8 | 25.8 | 4.4 |
| Yavapai County | 16.0 | 449 | 1.2 | 14.8 | 8.1 | 22.0 | 20.6 |
| Coconino County | 20.0 | 282 | 3.5 | -2.8 | 36.9 | 7.0 | 6.2 |
| Greenlee County | 21.0 | 28 | 3.3 | -12.5 | 25.8 | 9.9 | 4.6 |
| Maricopa County | 22.2 | 6,091 | 1.7 | 10.4 | 22.6 | 11.7 | 333.8 |
| Navajo County | 24.0 | 596 | 6.1 | 8.2 | 54.1 | 10.0 | 9.8 |
| Santa Cruz County | 24.8 | 397 | 9.6 | 5.3 | 24.0 | 10.7 | 31.0 |
| Apache County | 53.3 | 808 | 14.1 | 4.4 | 80.5 | 8.3 | 6.2 |
| Mean | | 972 | 3 | 7 | 26.6 | 15.3 | 42 |
| Median | | 482 | 2 | 8 | 25.8 | 14.7 | 19 |
| Min | | 28 | 1 | -13 | 8.1 | 7.0 | 4 |
| Max | | 6,091 | 10 | 23 | 54.1 | 25.8 | 334 |

TABLE A.3
SIMILARITY INDEX FOR YAVAPAI COUNTY, ARIZONA

| County | Similarity Index | Similarity Index Components: Elderly FSP Participants: Total | Participation Rate | Percent Change in Participation | Nonwhite Population (Percent) | Age 65+ Population (Percent) | Population Density |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pilot County** | | | | | | | |
| Yavapai County | 0.0 | 449 | 1.2 | 14.8 | 8.1 | 22.0 | 20.6 |
| **Comparison Group** | | | | | | | |
| Mohave County | 4.8 | 663 | 2.1 | 13.3 | 9.9 | 20.5 | 11.6 |
| **Other Counties** | | | | | | | |
| Gila County | 13.5 | 207 | 2.0 | 5.1 | 22.2 | 19.8 | 10.8 |
| La Paz County | 15.5 | 95 | 1.9 | 23.4 | 25.8 | 25.8 | 4.4 |
| Pinal County | 16.1 | 638 | 2.0 | 11.1 | 30 | 16 | 34 |
| Yuma County | 20.9 | 756 | 2.9 | 5.9 | 31.7 | 16.5 | 29.0 |
| Cochise County | 21.7 | 802 | 4.6 | 7.8 | 23.3 | 14.7 | 19.1 |
| Pima County | 23.0 | 2,926 | 2.4 | 8.6 | 24.9 | 14.2 | 91.8 |
| Graham County | 27.9 | 173 | 4.3 | 5.5 | 32.9 | 11.9 | 7.2 |
| Maricopa County | 32.0 | 6,091 | 1.7 | 10.4 | 22.6 | 11.7 | 333.8 |
| Greenlee County | 33.0 | 28 | 3.3 | -12.5 | 25.8 | 9.9 | 4.6 |
| Coconino County | 34.8 | 282 | 3.5 | -2.8 | 36.9 | 7.0 | 6.2 |
| Santa Cruz County | 35.9 | 397 | 9.6 | 5.3 | 24.0 | 10.7 | 31.0 |
| Navajo County | 39.3 | 596 | 6.1 | 8.2 | 54.1 | 10.0 | 9.8 |
| Apache County | 68.7 | 808 | 14.1 | 4.4 | 80.5 | 8.3 | 6.2 |
| Mean | | 1,007 | 3 | 7 | 26.6 | 15.1 | 44 |
| Median | | 523 | 3 | 8 | 25.4 | 14.5 | 15 |
| Min | | 28 | 1 | -13 | 8.1 | 7.0 | 4 |
| Max | | 6,091 | 10 | 23 | 54.1 | 25.8 | 334 |

TABLE A.4
SIMILARITY INDEX FOR GENESEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

| | | Similarity Index Components | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elderly FSP Participants | | | | | |
| County | Similarity Index | Total | Participation Rate | Percent Change in Participation | Nonwhite Population (Percent) | Age 65+ Population (Percent) | Population Density |
| Pilot County | | | | | | | |
| Genesee | 0.0 | 2,506 | 2.9 | 8.6 | 24.7 | 11.6 | 681.5 |
| Comparison Group | | | | | | | |
| 1 Saginaw | 5.7 | 1,284 | 2.6 | 5.2 | 24.7 | 13.5 | 259.6 |
| 2 Ingham | 6.1 | 1,334 | 2.9 | 6.3 | 20.5 | 9.4 | 499.7 |
| 3 Muskegon | 8.4 | 1,182 | 3.0 | 13.2 | 18.7 | 12.9 | 334.4 |
| 4 Berrien | 9.5 | 1,067 | 2.5 | 5.3 | 20.3 | 14.4 | 284.5 |
| 5 Kalamazoo | 9.9 | 1,066 | 2.4 | 7.5 | 15.4 | 11.4 | 424.6 |
| Mean | 7.9 | 1,187 | 2.7 | 7.5 | 19.9 | 12.3 | 360.6 |
| Other Counties | | | | | | | |
| Chippewa | 7.0 | 192 | 2.3 | 9.1 | 24.1 | 12.7 | 24.7 |
| Washtenaw | 10.4 | 864 | 2.1 | 6.7 | 22.6 | 8.1 | 454.8 |
| Calhoun | 10.5 | 916 | 2.6 | 10.4 | 16.1 | 13.7 | 194.6 |
| Kent | 11.1 | 2,322 | 2.3 | 14.7 | 16.9 | 10.4 | 671.0 |
| Baraga | 12.0 | 69 | 2.5 | 13.1 | 21.4 | 16.3 | 9.7 |
| Oakland | 12.9 | 5,043 | 2.2 | 3.8 | 17.2 | 11.3 | 1367.9 |
| Montcalm | 14.8 | 356 | 2.8 | 9.2 | 5.2 | 12.1 | 86.5 |
| Jackson | 15.2 | 745 | 2.1 | 7.5 | 11.5 | 12.9 | 224.1 |
| Van Buren | 15.3 | 666 | 3.8 | 9.0 | 12.1 | 12.3 | 124.8 |
| Oceana | 15.4 | 192 | 3.2 | 10.3 | 9.6 | 14 | 49.7 |
| Cass | 15.8 | 329 | 2.5 | 14.2 | 10.8 | 13.6 | 103.9 |
| Newaygo | 16.9 | 327 | 3.2 | 9.7 | 5.2 | 12.8 | 56.9 |
| Isabella | 17.2 | 240 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 8.5 | 9 | 110.4 |
| St Clair | 17.3 | 770 | 2.2 | 9.2 | 5.0 | 12.2 | 226.5 |
| Bay | 17.7 | 709 | 2.5 | 8.7 | 5.1 | 14.7 | 248.1 |
| Eaton | 17.7 | 306 | 1.7 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 11.3 | 179.6 |
| Houghton | 17.8 | 312 | 2.8 | 9.5 | 4.5 | 15.5 | 35.6 |
| Branch | 18.3 | 255 | 2.4 | 13.3 | 6.6 | 13.1 | 90.3 |
| St Joseph | 19.0 | 338 | 2.3 | 3.0 | 6.5 | 13 | 123.9 |
| Midland | 19.1 | 300 | 2.0 | 8.3 | 4.5 | 12 | 159.1 |
| Emmet | 19.3 | 166 | 2.5 | 4.4 | 5.7 | 14.3 | 67.2 |
| Osceola | 19.4 | 174 | 3.1 | 10.1 | 2.5 | 14.2 | 41.0 |
| Allegan | 19.5 | 397 | 2.0 | 13.1 | 6.5 | 11.1 | 127.6 |
| Tuscola | 19.9 | 266 | 2.1 | 9.5 | 4.0 | 12.8 | 71.7 |
| Crawford | 20.2 | 113 | 3.1 | 8.7 | 3.6 | 16.6 | 25.6 |
| Charlevoix | 20.7 | 160 | 2.7 | 15.1 | 3.7 | 14.9 | 62.6 |
| Sanilac | 20.8 | 328 | 2.8 | 14.3 | 3.1 | 15.4 | 46.2 |
| Shiawassee | 20.9 | 346 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.6 | 12 | 133.0 |
| Monroe | 21.0 | 427 | 1.5 | 8.7 | 4.6 | 11.1 | 264.9 |
| Lenawee | 21.2 | 356 | 1.7 | 3.8 | 7.5 | 12.7 | 131.7 |
| Mason | 21.6 | 215 | 2.6 | 13.2 | 4.2 | 16.8 | 57.1 |
| Hillsdale | 21.6 | 236 | 2.1 | 5.8 | 2.4 | 13.3 | 77.7 |
| Delta | 21.9 | 282 | 2.6 | 12.8 | 4.2 | 17 | 32.9 |
| Barry | 22.1 | 204 | 1.7 | 6.8 | 2.6 | 11.8 | 102.1 |

TABLE A.4 (Continued)
SIMILARITY INDEX FOR GENESEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

| | | Similarity Index Components | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elderly FSP Participants | | | | | |
| County | Similarity Index | Total | Participation Rate | Percent Change in Participation | Nonwhite Population (Percent) | Age 65+ Population (Percent) | Population Density |
| Menominee | 22.3 | 197 | 2.5 | 11.3 | 3.8 | 17.3 | 24.3 |
| Lapeer | 22.3 | 239 | 1.8 | 6.7 | 3.8 | 9.6 | 134.4 |
| Alpena | 22.4 | 228 | 2.6 | 10.7 | 1.8 | 17.1 | 54.6 |
| Macomb | 22.5 | 3,192 | 1.8 | 16.5 | 7.3 | 13.7 | 1642.0 |
| Mecosta | 22.8 | 321 | 3.9 | 18.0 | 7.3 | 13.2 | 72.9 |
| Keweenaw | 22.8 | 23 | 2.6 | 9.5 | 5.0 | 20.3 | 4.3 |
| Kalkaska | 23.3 | 132 | 3.6 | 13.8 | 2.5 | 13.7 | 29.5 |
| Gladwin | 23.5 | 218 | 2.8 | 15.3 | 2.4 | 18.3 | 51.3 |
| Otsego | 23.6 | 132 | 2.7 | 23.4 | 2.5 | 13.7 | 45.2 |
| Ionia | 23.8 | 268 | 2.4 | 30.1 | 8.0 | 10 | 107.4 |
| Schoolcraft | 23.9 | 112 | 3.8 | 15.5 | 11.3 | 18.6 | 7.6 |
| Marquette | 23.9 | 288 | 1.9 | 17.6 | 4.9 | 13.5 | 35.5 |
| Mackinac | 24.0 | 36 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 19.9 | 18.2 | 11.7 |
| Gratiot | 24.1 | 230 | 2.3 | 28.5 | 8.0 | 13.5 | 74.2 |
| Oscoda | 24.2 | 87 | 2.7 | 10.1 | 2.2 | 20.2 | 16.7 |
| Alger | 24.4 | 72 | 2.4 | 28.6 | 12.2 | 17.2 | 10.7 |
| Clinton | 24.4 | 133 | 1.2 | 7.3 | 3.6 | 10.9 | 113.2 |
| Cheboygan | 24.5 | 159 | 2.2 | 3.2 | 5.2 | 17.9 | 36.9 |
| Wexford | 25.0 | 261 | 3.7 | 17.0 | 2.7 | 14.0 | 53.9 |
| Ontonagon | 25.3 | 83 | 2.6 | 7.8 | 2.8 | 21.6 | 6.0 |
| Ottawa | 25.8 | 350 | 1.0 | 17.8 | 8.5 | 10.1 | 421.0 |
| Arenac | 25.9 | 187 | 3.9 | 14.7 | 4.6 | 16.6 | 47.1 |
| Manistee | 26.3 | 237 | 3.2 | 24.1 | 5.8 | 18.1 | 45.1 |
| Clare | 26.7 | 310 | 3.6 | 17.0 | 2.6 | 17.3 | 55.1 |
| Gogebic | 26.8 | 193 | 2.5 | 2.1 | 5.8 | 22.6 | 15.8 |
| Antrim | 26.9 | 114 | 1.8 | 4.6 | 3.0 | 17.5 | 48.4 |
| Ogemaw | 27.3 | 262 | 3.9 | 10.1 | 2.5 | 18.8 | 38.4 |
| Huron | 27.9 | 232 | 1.9 | 5.9 | 2.0 | 19.4 | 43.1 |
| Presque Isle | 28.5 | 117 | 2.2 | 7.3 | 1.9 | 22.3 | 21.8 |
| Dickinson | 28.9 | 143 | 1.6 | 11.7 | 2.0 | 18.1 | 35.9 |
| Livingston | 28.9 | 206 | 1.1 | 13.8 | 2.9 | 8.3 | 276.3 |
| Grand Traverse | 29.7 | 244 | 1.7 | 28.4 | 3.5 | 13.1 | 167.0 |
| Iron | 30.1 | 137 | 2.2 | 7.0 | 3.7 | 25.2 | 11.3 |
| Roscommon | 30.5 | 221 | 2.3 | 13.3 | 2.0 | 23.8 | 48.9 |
| Missaukee | 30.6 | 182 | 5.2 | 8.3 | 2.5 | 14.8 | 25.5 |
| Montmorency | 31.5 | 118 | 2.9 | 22.9 | 1.6 | 23.9 | 18.8 |
| Benzie | 32.6 | 59 | 1.4 | 22.9 | 3.6 | 17.5 | 49.8 |
| Alcona | 33.2 | 87 | 1.8 | 4.8 | 2.0 | 24.5 | 17.4 |
| Luce | 33.5 | 91 | 4.8 | 42.2 | 17.2 | 15.4 | 7.8 |
| Iosco | 33.7 | 232 | 2.6 | 32.6 | 3.1 | 21.6 | 49.8 |
| Lake | 35.3 | 207 | 5.7 | 24.0 | 15.3 | 19.7 | 20.0 |
| Wayne | 35.8 | 19,332 | 3.8 | 2.3 | 48.3 | 12.1 | 3356.9 |
| Leelanau | 40.6 | 39 | 0.8 | 39.3 | 6.5 | 17.4 | 60.5 |